Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

To The Students

M. K. GANDHI

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN, BOMBAY 7

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ABOUT THE BOOK

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This book contains a beautiful and inspiring exposition of students' *dharma* (duty) and deals with all the manifold aspects of student-life—its hopes and aspirations, its failures and disappointments, and also its trials and temptations. To the various complex and perplexing problems of students, it offers most apt and effective solutions, and lays great emphasis on character-building.

This character-building, however, says Gandhiji, comes not from the pages of the school books, nor from the fine lectures of teachers and professors, but it comes from their very lives, from within the students themselves. Exhorting the students to cultivate character above everything else, Gandhiji tells them that all the education that they are receiving will be reduced to nothing if it is not built on the foundation of pure character.

Gandhiji wants the students to observe personal purity of mind and body and action, and be fearlessly truthful. The code of conduct that he prescribes for them, as their father, guide and friend, is: "Do not lie under any circumstances whatsoever. Keep nothing secret, take your teachers and elders into your confidence, and make a clean breast of everything to them. Bear ill-will to none; do not say an evil thing of anyone behind his back; above all, 'to thine ownself be true' so that you are false to no one else. Truthful dealing, even in the least little things of life, is the only secret of pure life."

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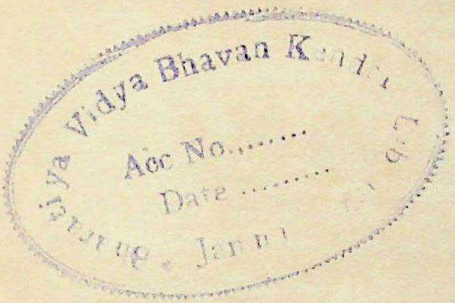

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I like Anand Hingorani's
idea of collecting my
writings under suitable
heads. The reader will not
fail to appreciate the
labour he has given to
securing attractive
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M K Gandhi

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TO
THE STUDENTS

No. 89-G

By

M. K. GANDHI

EDITED & PUBLISHED

By

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PREFACE

SOME thirty years ago, under this very title, a book was published by me containing Gandhiji's message to the student community of India. The demand for the book was so great that one was unable to cope with it fully though the book ran into four editions. It was acclaimed on all hands as "a striking book," "a gospel" and "the *Bible* of Indian students". A noted journal even recommeded its study as "a duty and a privilege" which the youth of India, it said, should not shirk. Another equally reputed journal hailed it as "a never-failing friend, a sympathetic teacher and a true guide" of not only the students of India, but of the world at large as well.

In this, the latest edition of the book, the reader will find practically all the interesting and essential features of the old editions, and many more besides. The book contains a beautiful and inspiring exposition of students' *dharma* (duty) and deals with all the manifold aspects of student-life—its hopes and aspirations, its failures and disappointments, and also its trials and temptations. To the various complex and perplexing problems of students, it offers most apt and effective solutions, and lays great emphasis on character-building.

This character-building, however, says Gandhiji, comes not from the pages of the school books, nor from the fine lectures of teachers and professors, but it comes from their very lives, from within the students themselves. Exhorting the students to cultivate character above everything else, Gandhiji tells them that all the education that they are receiving will be reduced to nothing if it is not built on the foundation of pure character. "How nice it would be," he says, "if we could lay a foundation of good character, so that stones of

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stones might be raised thereon, and we might look back with joy and pride upon the edifice."

Gandhiji regards students as the hope of the nation and he is firmly of the opinion that the students themselves hold their destiny in their own hands. He ever wants them to observe personal purity of mind and body and action, and be fearlessly truthful. For, truthfulness, according to him, is the master-key. The code of conduct that he prescribes for the students as their father, guide and friend, is : "Do not lie under any circumstances whatsoever. Keep nothing secret, take your teachers and elders into your confidence and make a clean breast of everything to them. Bear ill-will to none; do not say an evil thing of anyone behind his back; above all, 'to thine ownself be true' so that you are false to no one else. Truthful dealing, even in the least little things of life, is the only secret of a pure life."

The first step to a true education, in Gandhiji's view, is the possession of a pure heart. And this pure heart only he can have who has full faith in God. Hence, he tells the students: "If the education you get turns you away from God, I do not know how it is going to help you and how you are going to help the world." Appealing to them not to lose faith in God and, therefore, in themselves, he asks them to remember that if they harbour a single evil thought, a single sinful thought, they lack that faith. And he tells them further: "Remember that we have in this world no enemy greater than ourselves. No one can harm us so much as we can ourselves. If you are, therefore, brave boys and brave girls, you will fight desperately and valliantly against the whole brood of these thoughts. No sinful act was ever done in this world without the prompting of a sinful thought." He, therefore, suggests to the students to exercise strict vigilance on every thought welling up in their breast.

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To-day when the spirit of indiscipline and defiance is abroad amongst the student community as a whole, it is well worth recalling Gandhiji's forceful plea for cultivating discipline and restraint. Addressing the students on the need of these virtues, he says: "All things in the universe, including the sun and the moon and the stars, obey certain laws. Without the restraining influence of these laws, the world will not go on for a single moment. You, whose mission of life is service of your fellow-men, will go to pieces if you do not impose upon yourselves some sort of discipline. It is discipline and restraint that separate us from the brute. If we will be men walking with our heads erect, and not walking on all fours, let us understand and put ourselves under voluntary discipline and restraint."

Again, talking of the choice before our youth to-day, he says: "The choice lies between the way of self-restraint and the way of indulgence and ease; the one leading to salvation and freedom, the other to utter destruction. There is the greatest need for our youth to be on their guard. The present is for them an age of transition of ideals, and of ordeals; and the one thing needful for the world, its youth and particularly the youth of India in this crisis, is Tolstoy's progressive self-restraint; for, it alone can lead to true freedom for themselves, the country and the world." And he adds : "The test of the youth lies before them, and that is to win their diploma from the University of Life, with the snares and pitfalls and ordeals, without which their academic degrees will be in vain."

There is no gainsaying the fact that any student who reads this book with a receptive mind and in a reverent spirit, is bound to benefit a lot by its perusal. He will not only feel inspired and elevated in mind, but also learn to evaluate things and problems of life in proper perspective. Specially he who is lucky to come under the magic spell of Gandhiji's

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written word, will find that his views are completely transformed for the better. And when such transformation does take place, it can then be justifiably said about him that he has really won the highest diploma from the University of Life.

ANAND T. HINGORANI

7, Edmonstone Road,
Allahabad
June 8, 1965.

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CHAPTER I

THE DUTY OF STUDENTS

I HAVE to speak to-day on the *dharma* or duty of students. That *dharma* is as easy as it is difficult. According to Hinduism, the student is a *Brahmachari*, and *Brahmacharya-Ashrama* is the student-state. Celibacy is a narrow interpretation of *Brahmacharya*. The original meaning is the life or the state of a student. That means control of the senses. But the whole period of study or acquirement of knowledge by means of control of the senses came to be regarded as *Brahmacharya-Ashrama*. This period of life necessarily means very much taking and very little giving. We are mainly recipients in this state, taking whatever we can get from parents, teachers and from the world. But the taking, if it carries—as it did—no obligation of simultaneous repayment, it necessarily carries an obligation to repay the whole debt, with compound interest, at the proper time. That is why Hindus maintain *Brahmacharya-Ashrama* as a matter of religious duty.

The life of a *Brahmachari* and a *Sannyasi* are regarded as spiritually similar. The *Brahmachari* must needs be a *Sannyasi*, if he is to be a *Brahmachari*. For the *Sannyasi*, it is a matter of choice. The four *Ashramas* of Hinduism have nowadays lost their sacred character and exist, if at all, in name. The life of the student *Brahmachari* is poisoned at the very spring. Though there is nothing left of the *Ashramas* to-day, which we may hold up to the present generation as something to learn from and copy, we may still hark back to the ideals that inspired the original *Ashramas*.

How can we understand the duty of students to-day? We have fallen so much from the ideal. The parents take the

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lead in giving the wrong direction. They feel that their children should be educated only in order that they may earn wealth and position. Education and knowledge are thus being prostituted and we look in vain for the peace, innocence and bliss that the life of student ought to be.

Our students are weighed down with cares and worries when they should really be 'careful for nothing'. They have simply to receive and to assimilate. They should know only to discriminate between what should be received and what rejected. It is the duty of the teacher to teach his pupils discrimination. If we go on taking in indiscriminately, we would be no better than machines. We are thinking, knowing beings, and we must in this period distinguish truth from untruth, sweet from bitter language, clean from unclean things, and so on.

But the student's path to-day is strewn with more difficulties than the one of distinguishing good from bad things. He has to fight the hostile atmosphere around him. Instead of the sacred surroundings of a *Rishi Guru's Ashrama* and his paternal care, he has the atmosphere of broken-down home and the artificial surroundings, created by the modern system of education. The *Rishis* taught their pupils without books. They only gave them few *mantras*, which the pupils treasured in their memories and translated in practical life. The present-day student has to live in the midst of heaps of books, sufficient to choke him. In my own days, Reynold was much in vogue among students and I escaped him only because I was far from being a brilliant student and never cared to peep out of school text-books. When I went to England, however, I saw that these novels were tabooed in

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decent circles and that I had lost nothing by having never read them.

Similarly, there are many other things which a student might do worse than reject. One such thing is the craze for earning a career. Only the *Grihastia*—householder—has to think of it, it is none of the *Brahmachari* student's *dharma*. He has to acquaint himself with the condition of things in his own country, try to realize the magnitude of the crisis with which it is faced and the work that it requires of him. I dare say many amongst you read newspapers. I do not think I can ask you to eschew them altogether; but I would ask you to eschew everything of ephemeral interest, and I can tell you that newspapers afford nothing of permanent interest. They offer nothing to help the formation of character, and yet I know the craze for newspapers. It is pitiable, terrible. I am talking in this strain as I have myself made some experiments in education. Out of those experiments, I learnt the meaning of education. I discovered *Satyagraha* and Non-co-operation, and launched on those new experiments. I assure you I have never regretted having tried these last, nor have I undertaken them simply with the object of winning political *Swaraj*. I have ventured to place them even before students. For, they are innocent.[1]

Students As Nation-Builders

STUDENTS have got to become nation-builders. The base imitation of the West, the ability to speak and write correct and polished English, will not add one brick to the Temple of Freedom. The student world, which is receiving an education far too expensive for starving India, and an education which only a microscopic minority [illegible]

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to receive, is expected to qualify itself for it by giving its life-blood to the nation. Students must become pioneers in conservative reform, conserving all that is good in the nation and fearlessly ridding society of the innumerable abuses that have crept into it. They can, and they must, study and discuss social and economic questions which are as important to our generation as the highest political question. A nation-building programme can leave no part of the nation untouched.

Students have to react upon the dumb millions. They have to learn to think, not in terms of a province, or a town, or a class, or a caste, but in terms of a continent and of the millions who include untouchables, drunkards, hooligans and even prostitutes, for whose existence in our midst every one of us is responsible. Students, in olden times, were called *Brahmacharis*, that is, those who walked with and in the fear of God. They were honoured by kings and, in return, they gave to the nation a hundredfold strong souls, strong brains, strong arms. Students, in the modern world, wherever they are to be found among fallen nations, are considered to be their hope, and have become the self-sacrificing leaders of reforms in every department. . Not that we have no such examples in India: but they are far too few.[2]

What Students Can Do

IT has been a matter of the greatest joy to me and consolation, in the face of many difficulties, to find that the student world throughout India has a warm corner for me in their heart. The students have lightened my burden to a very great extent. But I cannot suppress from me the feeling that, in spite of this personal affection that the students

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have shown to me everywhere and even identification with the poorest of the land, the students have yet to cover a vast amount of ground. For, you are the hope of the future. You will be called upon, when you are discharged from your colleges and schools, to enter upon public life, to lead the poor people of this country. I would, therefore, like you students to have a sense of responsibility and show it in a much more tangible manner.

It is a remarkable fact, and a regrettable fact, that in the case of the vast majority of students, whilst they entertain noble impulses during their student days, these disappear when they finish their studies. The vast majority of them look out for loaves and fishes. Surely, there is something wrong in this. There is one reason which is obvious. Every educationist, everyone who has had anything to do with the students, has realized that our educational system is faulty. It does not correspond to the requirements of the country, certainly not to the requirements of pauper India. There is no correspondence between the education that is given and the home life and the village life.

Taking things as they are, we have to consider what is possible for the students to do and what more we can do in order to serve the country. The answer that has come to me and to many, who are eager to see that the student world gives a good account of itself, is that the students have to search within and look after their personal character. Purity of personal life is the one indispensable condition for building a sound education. And my meetings with thousands of students and the correspondence, which I continuously have with the students in which they pour out their innermost feel-

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ings and take me into their confidence, show me quite clearly that there is much left to be desired. I am sure that all of you understand thoroughly what I mean.

In our languages there is a beautiful word, equivalent for the word student, that is *Brahmachari*. *Vidyarthi* is a coined word and a poor equivalent for *Brahmachari*.* And I hope you know what the word *Brahmachari* means. It means searcher after God, one who conducts himself so asto bring himself nearest to God in the least possible time. And all the great religions of the world, however much they may differ, are absolutely one on this fundamental, that no man or woman with an impure heart can possibly appear before the Great White Throne. All our learning or recitation of the *Vedas*, correct knowledge of Sanskrit, Latin, Greek and what not, will avail us nothing, if they do not enable us to cultivate absolute purity of heart. The end of all knowledge must be building up of character.[3]

*" The ancient word for *Vidyarathi* (student) was *Brahmachari*, because all his study and activity had as their objective the search of *Brahman*, and he built his life on a sure foundation of stoic simplicity and self-restraint, which every religion has enjoined on the student. He who let the reins of his passions and desires loose in his youth was never able to curb them in his old age. I do not want you to eschew play and confine yourself to the closet. But let all your work and play have the exalted objective of a life of restraint, let them take you nearer to God."

— *Young India*, July 21, 1927.

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STUDENTS AND CHARACTER-BUILDING

I FEEL and I have felt, during the whole of my public life, that what we need, what any nation needs, but we perhaps of all the nations of the world need just now, is nothing else and nothing less than character-building. And this is the view propounded by that great patriot, Mr. Gokhale. As you know, in many of his speeches he used to say that we would get nothing, we would deserve nothing unless we had character to back what we wished for...You know also that he used to say so often that our average was less than the average of so many European nations. I do not know whether that statement by him whom, with pride, I consider to be my political *Guru*, has really foundation in fact, but I do believe that there is much to be said to justify it in so far as educated India is concerned; not because we, the educated portion of the community, have blunderd, but because we have been creatures of circumstances.

Be that as it may, this is the maxim of life which I have accepted, namely, that no work done by any man, no matter how great he is, will really prosper unless he has religious backing. But what is religion? The question will be immediately asked. I, for one, would answer : Not the religion which you will get after reading all the scriptures of the world; it is not really a grasp by the brain, but it is a heart-grasp. It is a thing which is not alien to us, but is a thing which is to be evolved out of us. It is always within us: with some consciously so, with the others quite unconsciously. But it is there: and whether we wake up this religious instinct in us through outside assistance or by inward growth, no matter

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how it is done, it has got to be done if we want to do anything in the right manner and anything that is going to persist.[1]

All the education that you are receiving will be reduced to nothing if it is not built on the foundation of a pure character.

How nice it would be if we could raise a foundation of good character so that stones on stones might be raised thereon and we might look back with joy and pride upon the edifice. But character cannot be built with mortar and stone. It cannot be built by other hands than your own. The Principal and the Professors cannot give you character from the pages of books. Character-building comes from their very lives and, really speaking, it must come from within yourselves.

As I was studying Christianity, Hinduism and other great faiths of the world, I saw that there was a fundamental unity moving amidst the endless variety that we see in all religions *viz.*, Truth and Innocence. You must take the word 'Innocence' literally, that is to mean non-killing and non-violence, and if you boys will take your stand defiantly always on Truth and Innocence, you will feel that you have built on solid foundation.[2]

Fundamental Maxims of Life

SCHOLASTIC education is not merely brick and mortar. It is true boys and true girls who build such institutions from day to day. I know some huge architecturally perfect buildings going under the name of scholastic institutions, but they are nothing but whited sepulchres. Conversely, I know also some institutions which have to struggle from day to day for their material existence, but which, because of this very want, are

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spiritually making advance from day to day. One of the greatest teachers* that mankind has ever seen delivered his living message not from a man-made building, but under the shadow of a magnificent tree.

As father of, you might say, many boys and girls, you might almost say of thousands of boys and girls, I want to tell you, boys, that after all you hold your destiny in your own hands. I do not care what you learn or what you do not learn in your school, if you will observe two conditions. One condition is that you must be fearlessly truthful against heaviest odds under every circumstance imaginable. A truthful boy, a brave boy will never think of hurting even a fly. He will defend all the weak boys in his own school and help, whether inside the school or outside the school, all those who need his help. A boy who does not observe personal purity of mind and body and action is a boy who should be driven out of any school. A chivalrous boy would always keep his mind pure, his eyes straight and his hands unpolluted. You do not need to go to any school to learn these fundamental maxim of life, and if you will have this triple character with you, you will build on a solid foundation.[3]

Self-Purification

GOD can never be realized by one who is not pure of heart. Self-purification, therefore, must mean purification in all the walks of life. And purification being highly infectious, purification of oneself necessarily leads to the purification of one's surroundings.

---

* Lord Buddha.

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But the path of self-purification is hard and steep. To attain to perfect purity, one has to become absolutely passion-free in thought, speech and action; to rise above the opposing currents of love and hatred, attachment and repulsion. To conquer the subtle passions seems to me to be harder far than the physical conquest of the world by the force of arms.[4]

Truthfulness is the master-key. Do not lie under any circumstances whatsoever. Keep nothing secret, take your teachers and your elders into your confidence and make a clean breast of everything to them. Bear ill-will to none, do not say an evil thing of anyone behind his back, above all 'to thine ownself be true', so that you are false to no one else. Truthful dealing, even in the least little things of life, is the only secret of a pure life.[5]

Miasma of Moral Impurity

PUT all your knowledge, learning, and scholarship in one scale and truth and purity in the other, and the latter will far outweigh the other. The miasma of moral impurity has to-day spread among our school-going children and, like a hidden epidemic, is working havoc among them. I, therefore, appeal to you, boys and girls, to keep your minds and bodies pure. All your scholarship, all your study of the scriptures will be in vain if you fail to translate their teachings into your daily life. I know that some of the teachers, too, do not lead pure and clean lives. To them I say that, even if they impart all the knowledge in the world to their students but inculcate not truth and purity among them, they will have betrayed them and, instead of raising them, set them on the downward road to perdition. Knowledge without character is a power

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for evil only, as seen in the instance of so many talented thieves and 'gentlemen rascals' in the world.[6]

First Step to a True Education

I HAVE come in contact with thousands of students. They have confided their innermost secrets to me and have given me the right to enter their hearts. I know, therefore, all your difficulties and every one of your weaknesses. I do not know whether I can render any effective help to you. I can but be your friend and guide, attempt to share your sorrows, and give you the benefit of my experience, though you must know that the only Help of the helpless is God. There is no greater punishment or misery for man than that his faith in God should be blasted. And I confess to a deep sense of sorrow that faith is gradually disappearing in the student world. When I suggest to a Hindu boy to have recourse to *Ramanama*, he stares at me and wonders who Rama may be; when I ask a Mussalman boy to read the *Quran* and fear God, he confesses his inability to read the *Quran* and *Allah* is a mere lip-profession. How can I convince such boys that the first step to a true education is a pure heart? If the education you get turns you away from God, I do not know how it is going to help you and how you are going to help the world.[7]

Never Lose Faith in God

SO, I say to the boys and girls: Never lose faith in God and, therefore, in yourselves, and remember that if you allow refuge to a single evil thought, a single sinful thought, remember that you lack that faith. Untruthfulness, uncharitableness, violence, sensuality, all these things are strangers to that faith. Remember that we have in this world no

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enemy greater than ourselves. The *Bhagavad Gita* proclaims it in almost every verse. If I was to sum up the teaching of the *Sermon on the Mount*, I would find the same answer. My reading of the *Quran* has led me to the same conclusion. No one can harm us so much as we can ourselves. If you are, therefore, brave boys and brave girls, you will fight desperately and valiantly against the whole brood of these thoughts. No sinful act was ever done in this world without the prompting of a sinful thought. You have to exercise strict vigilance over every thought welling up in your breast.

Many students, both boys and girls, have often told me that whilst they understand with their intellect the force of my remarks, they find it impossible in practice to control their thoughts, and thus they give up the struggle and give way to despair, and then finding some evil books to stimulate themselves they nurse the evil thoughts. I want to draw a sharp distinction between the two processes that happen within us. Except for perfect beings, evil thoughts will arise in every breast. Hence it is necessary for us to offer incessant prayer to God to keep us free from evil thoughts. That is the process which does us good. The other process is to think evil thoughts and to take delight in them. It is the most dangerous and harmful process, and it is that process which I invite you to fight with all your might. This is the easiest thing to do. For, every one of us can make the choice as to the guests we would invite or encourage in our own breasts. We might not be able to help the onslaught of the enemy, but it is given to us to die in the attempt to repel the onslaught.[8]

Plea for Personal Purity

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THAT Great Master (Gautama Buddha) taught us what is

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known as the right path and you boys come to institutions of this character to learn the right path, and to learn the right path is not merely to pack your brains with many things that sound nice and sweet, but to do the right things.

The first maxim of the right path is to tell the truth, to think the truth and to act the truth; and the second maxim is to love all that lives. Gautama Buddha was so filled with mercy and kindness that it was he who taught us to love not only the members of the human family, but to love all the animal world. He taught us also personal purity of life. Therefore, if you boys are not truthful, merciful and kind, if you are not pure in your personal conduct, you have to learn nothing in this institution.*

You are here† being taught the path that the Great Buddha gave to the world. And if you do not represent the teaching of the Buddha in your own lives, your having belonged to this institution will be considered useless, and you will not be true representatives of Buddha's teachings. Everything else that you will learn here will be perfectly useless, unless you can reproduce the central teaching of Gautama in your own lives. His was the right path, right speech, right thought and right conduct. He gave us the unadulterated law of human family. His love, his boundless love went out as much to the lower animals, to the lowest life as to the human beings. And he insisted upon purity of life.[9]

I have no doubt that your teachers repeatedly tell you that all this mental and literary training that you receive, will

*Ananda College, Colombo,
†Nalanda Vidyalaya, Colombo.
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be of no avail to you unless it is broad-based on Truth and Love. Truth will make you brave and fearless men, able to give a good account of yourselves wherever you go. Love will make life bearable for you, because love has a special quality of attracting abundance of love in return.[10]

Wherever there is pure love there is charity, there is personal purity, there immediately arises cohesion in that society. You will find that one step in your march towards purity leads on to another.[11]

Unless your education is founded on truth, good character, and purity of life, it is nothing worth. It will be like a house built on sand. I hope, therefore, that you will strive to be truthful in thought, word and deed.[12]

Your education is absolutely worthless, if it is not built on a solid foundation of truth and purity. If you, boys, are not careful about the personal purity of your lives and if you are not careful about being pure in thought, speech, and deed, then I tell you that you are lost, although you may become perfect finished scholars.

Purity consists, first of all, in possessing a pure heart, but what there is in the heart really comes out also and is shown in outward acts and outward behaviour. And a boy who wants to keep his mouth pure, will never utter a bad word. Of course, that is quite clear. But he neither will put anything into his mouth that will cloud his intellect, cloud his mind and damage his friends also.

I know that there are boys who smoke. Boys are becoming bad everywhere so far as this wretched habit of smoking is concerned.

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If any of you are smoking, you will henceforth give up that bad habit. Smoking fouls one's breath. It is a disgusting habit. When he is in a railway carriage, the smoker never cares whether there are ladies or men sitting about him who never smoke, and that the stench that comes out from his mouth may be disgusting to them.

The cigarette might be a small thing from a distance, but when the cigarette smoke goes into one's mouth and then comes out, it is poison. Smokers do not care where they spit.

Smoking clouds one's intellect, and it is a bad habit. If you ask doctors, and they happen to be good doctors, they will tell you that smoke has been the cause of cancer in many cases, or at least that smoke is at the bottom of it.

Why smoke when there is no necessity for it? It is no food. There is no enjoyment in it except in the first instance through suggestion from outside.[13]

I know that it is a most difficult thing to speak about an evil which is enveloping the whole world. If you have heard the name of Tolstoy, I quote his authority to show that Tolstoy, being an inveterate smoker himself, was speaking from experience when he said that tobacco dulled the intellect of man, let alone other senses. Indeed, he cites examples to show that most deliberate crimes have been committed under the influence of smoke, and, in one of his beautiful stories, he pictures the villain of the piece as committing murder, not after drink but after having had a smoke. Although it is perfectly true that the smoke habit is on the increase and it has amongst its supporters many of the brilliant men of the world, I consider it a spirit of evil.

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against it and the opponents are some of the best men in the West and great moralists.[14]

Smoking and Tea and Coffee Drinking

THESE are not necessities of life. There are some who manage to take ten cups of coffee a day. Is it necessary for their healthy development and for keeping them awake for the performance of their duties? If it is necessary to take coffee or tea to keep them awake, let them not drink coffee or tea but go to sleep. We must not become slaves to these things. But the majority of the people, who drink coffee or tea, are slaves to them. Cigars and cigarettes, whether foreign or indigenous, must be avoided. Cigarette smoking is like an opiate; and the cigars that you smoke have a touch of opium about them. They get to your nerves and you cannot leave them afterwards. How can a single student foul his mouth by converting it into a chimney? If you give up these habits of smoking cigars and cigarettes and drinking coffee and tea, you will find for yourselves how much you are able to save. A drunkard in Tolstoy's story is hesitating to execute his design of murder so long as he has not smoked his cigar. But he puffs it, and then gets up smiling and saying: 'What a coward am I', takes the dagger and does the deed. Tolstoy spoke from experience. He has written nothing without having had personal experience of it. And he is much more against cigars and cigarettes than against drink. But do not make the mistake that between drink and tobacco, drink is lesser evil. No. If cigarette is Beelzebub, then drink is Satan.[15]

Worse Than a Snake Bite

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THE drink habit is worse than a snake bite. A snake bite may

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poison a body to death, but the drink habit poisons and corrupts the soul. I would, therefore, urge you to fly from that curse as you would fly from a hissing snake.[16]

You might think that moderate drinking might be allowed since it seems to do you no harm. But, as the *Gita* says, one has to shape one's conduct not merely according to one's own requirements, but also with an eye to the effect that it would have on others. And if you see the terrible havoc that this fell habit is causing among the working classes of India, you would take a solemn vow not to touch liquor. Next, I warn you against the baneful poisonous literature from the West that is inundating the country and seeks, under the respectable and attractive garb of science, to seduce you from the path of purity and self-restraint. Manifestos justifying self-indulgence are sometimes issued over the signatures of bishops, doctors and other men of weight and influence, but you should never allow yourselves to be drawn away from the straight and narrow path of virtue. The path of self-indulgence and moral indiscipline is the surest way to perdition. I appeal to you to cultivate a snow-white purity of mind and body and pray to God that He might give you the wisdom and strength for it.[17]

Students' Shame

THERE is a most pathetic letter from a college girl in the Punjab. Here is my rendering of a portion of the letter :

" To girls and grown-up women there come times, in spite of their wish to the contrary, when they have to venture out alone whether they are going from one place to another in the same city, or from one town to another. And when they are thus found alone, evil-minded people pester them. They use improper or even indecent language, whilst they are passing by. And if fear does not check them, they do not hesitate to take further liberty.

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"By way of example, I want to give you my own experience of last night (26th October 1938). I was going with a girl companion of mine, on a very special errand, at about 7-30 p.m. It was impossible to secure a male companion at the time, and the errand could not be put off. On the way, a Sikh young man passed by on his cycle, and continued to murmur something till we were within hearing distance. We knew that it was aimed at us. We felt hurt and uneasy. There was no crowd on the road. Before we had gone a few paces, the cyclist returned. We recognized him at once, whilst he was still at a respectful distance. He wheeled towards us, heaven knows whether he had intended to get down or merely pass by us. We felt that we were in danger. We had no faith in our physical prowess. I myself am weaker than the average girl. But in my hands I had a big book. Somehow or other, courage came to me all of a sudden. I hurled the heavy book at the cycle and roared out : 'Dare you repeat your pranks ?" He could with difficulty keep his balance, put on speed and fled from us. Now, if I had not flung the book at his cycle, he might have harrassed us by his filthy language to the end of our journey. This was an ordinary, perhaps insignificant occurrence, but I wish you could come to Lahore and listen to the difficulties of us, unfortunte girls. First of all, tell me how, in the circumstances mentioned above, can girls apply the principle of *Ahimsa* and save themselves. Secondly, what is the remedy of curing youth of the abominable habit of insulting womenfolk ? You would not suggest that we should wait and suffer till a new generation taught from the childhood to be polite to their womenfolk comes into being."

Another Punjabi girl, to whom I gave the letter to read, supports the narrative from her own experience of her college days and tells me that what my correspondent has related is the common experience of most girls.

The other letter from an experienced woman relates to the experiences of her girl friends in Lucknow. They are molested in cinema theatres by boys sitting in the row behind them, using all kinds of language which I can only call indecent. They are stated to resort even to practical jokes, which have been described by my correspondent but which I must not reproduce here.

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If the immediate personal relief was all that was needed,

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no doubt the remedy that the girl, who describes herself to be physically weak, adopted, *i.e.*, of flinging her book at the cyclist, was quite correct. It is an age-long remedy. And I have said in these columns that, when a person wants to become violent, physical weakness does not come in the way of its use, even against a physically powerful opponent. And we know that, in the present age, there have been invented so many methods of using physical force, that even a little girl with sufficient intelligence can deal death and destruction. The fashion nowadays is growing of training girls to defend themselves in situations such as the one described by my correspondent. But she is wise enough to know that even though she was able to make effective use for the moment of the book she had in her hand as a weapon of defence, it was no remedy for the growing evil. In the cases of rude remarks, there need be no perturbation, but there should be no indifference. All such cases should be published in the papers. Names of the offenders should be published when they are traced. There should be no false modesty about exposing the evil. There is nothing like public opinion for castigating public misconduct. There is no doubt that there is great public apathy about such matters. But it is not the public alone that are to blame. They must have before them examples of rudeness. Even as stealing cannot be dealt with unless cases of thieving are published and followed up, so also is it impossible to deal with cases of rude behaviour if they are suppressed. Crime and vice generally require darkness for prowling. They disappear when light plays upon them.

But I have a fear that the modern girl loves to be Juliet to half a dozen Romeos. She loves adventure. My corres-

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pondent seems to represent the unusual type. The modern girl dresses not to protect herself from wind, rain and sun, but to attract attention. She improves upon Nature by painting herself and looking extraordinary. The non-violent way is not for such girls. I have often remarked in these columns that definite rules govern the development of the non-violent spirit in us. It is a strenuous effort. It makes a revolution in the way of thinking and living. If my correspondent and the girls of her way of thinking will revolutionize their life in the prescribed manner, they will soon find that young men, who at all come in contact with them, will learn to respect them and to put on their best behaviour in their presence. But, if perchance, they find, as they may, that their very chastity is in danger of being violated, they must develop courage enough to die rather than yield to the brute in man. It has been suggested that a girl, who is gagged or bound so as to make her powerless even for struggling, cannot die as easily as I seem to think. I venture to assert that a girl, who has the will to resist, can burst all the bonds that may have been used to render her powerless. The resolute will gives her the strength to die.

But this heroism is possible only for those who have trained themselves for it. Those who have not a living faith in non-violence will learn the art of ordinary self-defence and protect themselves from indecent behaviour of unchivalrous youth.

The great question, however, is why should young men be devoid of elementary good manners so as to make decent girls be in perpetual fear of molestation from them? I should

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be sorry to discover that the majority of young men have lost all sense of chivalry. But they should, as a class, be jealous of their reputation and deal with every case of impropriety occurring among their mates. They must learn to hold the honour of every woman as dear as that of their own sisters and mothers. All the education they receive will be in vain, if they do not learn good manners.

And, is it not as much the concern of professors and school-masters to ensure gentlemanliness among their pupils, as to prepare them for the subjects prescribed for the class-room ?[18]

The Modern Girl

I HAVE received a letter written on behalf of eleven girls, whose names and addresses have been sent to me. I give it below with changes that make it more readable, without in any way altering the meaning:

" Your comments on the letter of a lady student captioned '*Students' Shame*' deserve special attention. The modern girl, it seems, has provoked you to the extent that you have disposed of her finally as one playing Juliet to a dozen Romeos. This remark, which betrays your idea about women in general, is not very inspiring.

" In these days, when women are coming out of closed doors to help men and take an equal share of the burden of life, it is indeed strange that they are still blamed even when they are maltreated by men. It cannot be denied that instances can be cited where the fault is equally divided. There may be a few girls playing Juliets to half a dozen Romeos. But such cases presuppose the existence of half a dozen Romeos, moving about the streets in quest of a Juliet. And it cannot or should never be taken that modern girls are categorically all Juliets. or modern youth all Romeos. You yourself have come in contact with quite a number of modern girls, and may have been struck by their resolution, sacrifice and other sterling womanly virtues.

" As for forming public opinion against such misdemeanours, it is not for girls to do it, [illegible] so much out of false shame as from [illegible]

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" But a statement like this, from one revered all over the world, seems to hold a brief once more for that worn-out and unbecoming saying : ' Woman is the Gate of Hell '.

" From the foregoing remarks, however, please do not conclude that modern girls have no respect for you. They hold you in as much respect as every young man does. To be hated or pitied is what they resent much. They are ready to mend their ways, if they are really guilty. Their guilt, if any, must be conclusively proved before they are anathematized. In this respect, they would neither desire to take shelter under the covering of ' ladies please ', nor would they silently stand and allow the judge to condemn them in his own way. Truth must be faced ; the modern girl—' Juliet,' as you have called her—has courage enough to face it."

My correspondents do not perhaps know that I began service of India's women in South Africa more than forty years ago, when perhaps none of them was born. I hold myself to be incapable of writing anything derogatory to womanhood. My regard for the fair sex is too great to permit me to think ill of them. She is, what she has been described to be in English, the better-half of mankind. And my article was written to expose students' shame, not to advertise the frailties of girls. But, in giving the diagnosis of the disease, I was bound, if I was to prescribe the right remedy, to mention all the factors which induced the disease.

The modern girl has a special meaning. Therefore, there was no question of my restricting the scope of my remarks to some. But all the girls who receive English education are not modern girls. I know many who are not at all touched by the ' modern girl ' spirit. But there are some who have become modern girls. My remark was meant to warn India's girl students against copying the modern girl, and complicating a problem that has become a serious menace. For, at the time I received the letter referred to, I received also a letter from an Andhra girl student, bitterly complaining

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of the behaviour of Andhra students which, from the description given, is worse than what was described by the Lahore girl. This daughter of Andhra tells me, the simple dress of her girl friends gives them no protection, but they lack the courage to expose the barbarism of the boys who are a disgrace to the institution they belong to. I commend this complaint to the authorities of the Andhra University.

The eleven girls I invite to initiate a crusade against the rude behaviour of students. God helps only those who help themselves. The girls must learn the art of protecting themselves against the ruffianly behaviour of man.[19]

Be On Your Guard

AS one who has had some experience of life, take it from me that mere book-reading will be of little help to you in after-life. I know from correspondence with the students all over India, what wrecks they have become by having stuffed their brains with information derived from a cartload of books. Some have become unhinged, others have become lunatics, some have been leading a life of helpless impurity. My heart goes out to them when they say that, try as much as they might, they are what they are because they cannot overpower the devil. 'Tell us', they plaintively ask, 'how to get rid of the devil, how to get rid of the impurity that has seized us'. When I ask them to take *Ramanama* and kneel before God and seek His help, they come to me and say: 'We do not know where God is. We do not know what it is to pray'. That is the state to which they have been reduced.

I have, therefore, been asking the students to be on their guard, not to read [illegible] there is with [illegible]

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reach, and I ask their teachers to cultivate their hearts and establish with the students a heart-contact. I have felt that the teachers' work lies more outside than inside the lecture room. In this work-a-day life, where teachers and professors work for the wages they get, they have no time to give to the students outside the classroom, and that is the greatest stumbling block in the development of the life and character of students to-day. But unless the teachers are prepared to give all their time outside the classroom to their students, not much can be done. Let them fashion their hearts rather than their brains. Let them help them to erase every word which means disappointment and despair out of their dictionary.

I am trying to put before you all that is welling up in my breast. Never own a defeat in a sacred cause, and make up your minds henceforth that you will be pure, and that you will find a response from God. But God never answers the prayers of the arrogant, nor the prayers of those who bargain with Him.

Have you heard the story of *Gajendra Moksha*? I ask the students who do not know one of the greatest of all poems one of the divinest things of the world, to learn it. A Tamil saying has always remained in my memory, and it means 'God is the Help of the helpless'. If you would ask Him to help you, you would go to Him in all your nakedness, approach Him without reservations, also without fear or doubts as to how He can help a fallen being like you. He who has helped millions who have approached Him, is He going to desert you? He makes no exception whatsoever, and you will find that every one of your prayers will be answered. The

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prayer of even the most impure will be answered. I am telling this out of my personal experience. I have gone through the purgatory. Seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything will be added unto you. Do not go to your books or to your teachers with impure hearts. Go with the purest hearts, and you will get from them what you want. If you want to become patriots, real patriots and protectors of the weak, espousers of the cause of the poor and the oppressed to whom the education you get is not available, if you want to become guardians of the purity of every girl and woman, purify your hearts first. If you approach your mission in life in that spirit, all will be well.[20]

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CHAPTER III

STUDENTS AND SOCIAL REFORM

ALL your scholarship, all your study of Shakespeare and Wordsworth would be vain, if at the same time you do not build your character and attain mastery over your thoughts and actions. When you have attained self-mastery and learnt to control your passions, you will not utter notes of despair. You cannot give your hearts and profess poverty of action. To give one's heart is to give all. You must, to start with, have hearts to give. And this you can do if you will cultivate them.

But what is it instead that we find to-day? The students to-day get married, not under compulsion from the parents I am told, but out of their own insistent desire. During student days, you are expected not to dissipate energy but to conserve it. I observe that over 50 per cent of you are married. If you will make the best of a bad job, you will, in spite of your marriage, put a severe restraint upon your passions and lead, whilst you are prosecuting your studies, a life of pure *Brahmacharya*. And you will find that at the end of your studies, you are all the better for that restraint physically, mentally and spiritually.

Do not by any means consider that I am presenting to you something that is utterly impossible for execution. The cult of those who, though they may be married, are exercising perfect self-restraint on themselves, is increasing with much profit to themselves and to the general benefit of mankind. To those who are unmarried, I would appeal to resist temptation.

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Many young men from various colleges write to me pathetic letters, asking me to tell them how they can get rid of their mental weakness. I have suggested to them the age-old prescription. They will no longer feel helpless if they will seek the help of God through all their weakness.

The same friend that told me about the marriage evil, also complained to me that students were guilty of involving their parents in extravagant expenditure on marriage ceremonies. Surely, marriage, you ought to know, is a sacrament and ought not to carry any expenditure with it. If those who have money will not curb the desire to spend it on feasting and revelry, the poor people will want to copy them and incur debts in so doing. You will, if you are brave, rise in revolt against any extravagant expenditure when you are ready to be married.[1]

Avoid Wasteful Expenditure

IT is the duty of young men firmly to resist premature marriage, more especially marriage during student life, and at all cost to resist all expenditure. Indeed, not more than Rs. 10 should be required for the performance of the religious ceremonial, and nothing beyond the ceremonial should be considered a necessary part of marriage rites. In this age of democracy, when the distinction between the rich and the poor, the high and the low, is sought to be abolished, it is for the rich to lead the poor to a contented life by exercising self-restraint in all their enjoyments and indulgences, and let them remember the verse in the *Bhagavad Gita:* "Whatever leaders of society do, the others will follow." The truth of this statement we see daily verified in our ex-

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perience, and nowhere more vividly than in marriage ceremonies and rites in connection with the dead. Thousands of poor people deprive themselves for this purpose of necessaries of life, and burden themselves with debts carrying ruinous rates of interest. This waste of national resources can be easily stopped if the educated youths of the country, especially sons of rich parents, will resolutely set their faces against every form of wasteful expenditure on their account.[2]

A Shame Upon Young Men

ANY young man who makes dowry a condition of marriage, discredits his education and his country and dishonours womanhood. There are many youth movements in the country. I wish that these movements would deal with questions of this character. Such associations often become self-adulation societies, instead of becoming, as they should be, bodies representing solid reform from within. Good as the work of these bodies is at times in helping public movements, it should be remembered that the youth of the country have their reward in the public appreciation they get. Such work, if it is not backed by internal reform, is likely to demoralize the youth by creating in them a sense of unwarranted self-satisfaction. A strong public opinion should be created in condemnation of the degrading practice of dowry, and young men, who soil their fingers with such ill-gotten gold, should be ex-communicated from society. Parents of girls should cease to be dazzled by English degrees, and should not hesitate to travel outside their little castes and provinces to secure true gallant young men for their daughters.[3]

A Sindh Curse

THE Amils of Sindh are probably the most [illegible]

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community in that province. But in spite of all their advance, there are some serious abuses of which they seem to have a monopoly. Of these, the custom of *Deti-Leti* is not the least serious. The Amils are a compact little community. The seriousness of the evil is not questioned by anybody. I have not known a single Amil to defend the vile custom. It has persisted because it is a custom patronized by the educated youth among the Amils. Their mode of life is above the means they can honestly command. Hence they have thrown all scruples to the wind and do not mind degrading themselves by prostituting the institution of marriage for their own base ends. And this one vicious habit has told upon the quality of their national work, which otherwise by their intellect and education they are capable of doing to the great benefit to the country.

Young educated Amils are able to squeeze the poor parents of marriageable girls only because there is no active public opinion against the custom. There should be work done in the schools and colleges and amongst the parents of girls. The parents should so educate their daughters that they would refuse to marry a young man who wanted a price for marrying and would rather remain spinsters than be party to the degrading terms. The only honourable terms in marriage are mutual love and mutual consent.[4]

To the Sindhi Students

AND what have you (boys) to say with regard to the scandalous custom of *Deti-Leti*? Instead of making your wives the queens of your homes and of your hearts, you have converted them into articles to be bought and sold

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Is this the lesson that you have imbibed from the reading of English literature? Woman has been described as the *Ardhanagana* or the better half of man. But you have reduced her to the position of a slave and the result is the state of paralysis in which you find your country. *Swaraj* is not meant for cowards, but for those who would mount smilingly to the gallows and refuse even to allow their eyes to be bandaged. Promise that you will wipe off the stain of *Deti-Leti*, that you will die to restore your sisters and wives to their full dignity and freedom. Then, I shall understand that you are ready for the freedom of your country.

As for you, young girls, to you I will only say that if I had a girl under my charge, I would rather keep her a maiden all her life than give her away to one who expected a single pie for taking her for his wife.[5]

Marriage by Purchase

THERE is no doubt that the custom (of dowry) is heartless. But, so far as I am aware, it does not touch the millions. The custom is confined to the middle class, who are but a drop in the ocean of Indian community. Whenever we talk of evil customs, we usually talk of the middle class. The millions living in the villages have their customs and woes of which we have as yet but little knowledge.

This, however, does not mean that one may ignore the dowry evil, because it is confined to a comparatively small number of the people of this country.

The system has to go. Marriage must cease to be a matter of arrangement made by parents for money. The system is intimately connected with caste. So long as

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choice is restricted to a few hundred young men or young women of a particular caste, the system will persist no matter what is said against it. The girls or boys or their parents will have to break the bonds of caste, if the evil is to be eradicated. Then, the age for marrying has also to be raised and the girls have to dare to remain spinsters, if need be, *i.e.*, if they do not get a suitable match. All this means education of a character that will revolutionize the mentality of the youth of the nation. Unfortunately, the system of education has no connection with our surroundings which, therefore, remain practically untouched by the education received by a microscopic minority of the boys and girls of the nation. Whilst, therefore, whatever can be done to abate the evil, must be done, it is clear to me that this evil, and many others which can be named, can only be tackled if there is education which responds to the rapidly changing conditions of the country. How is it that so many boys and girls, who have even passed through colleges, are found unable or unwilling to resist the manifestly evil custom which affects their future so intimately as marriage does? Why should educated girls be found to commit suicide because they are not suited? Of what value is their education, if it does not enable them to dare to defy a custom which is wholly indefensible, and repugnant to one's moral sense? The answer is clear. There is something radically wrong in the system of education that fails to arm girls and boys to fight against social or other evils. That education alone is of value which draws out the faculties of a student, so as to enable him or her to solve correctly the problems of life in every department.[6]

Avoidable Misery

It is [illegible] foolish education has made things so
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better for parents of daughters. In some cases they have become worse, in that the market price of possible young men, who would suit an English-educated daughter of an English-educated father, suffers an appreciable increase. The best help that can be rendered should consist in persuading and strengthening the parent to refuse to purchase a match for his daughter, but choose, or let the daughter choose, one who would marry her for love, not for money. This means a voluntary extension of the field of choice.

There must be a breach in the double wall of caste and province. If India is one and indivisible, surely there should be no artificial divisions creating innumerable little groups which would neither interdine nor intermarry. There is no religion in this cruel custom. It would not do to plead that individuals cannot make the commencement, and that they must wait till the whole society is ripe for the change. No reform has ever been brought about except through intrepid individuals breaking down inhuman customs or usages.[7]

Our Misfortune

IT is our misfortune that the sordidness of exacting a price for marrying a girl is not regarded as a decided disqualification. An altogether artificial value is put upon English collegiate education. It covers a multitude of sins. If the definition of 'accomplishment' was more sensible than it has become among the classes whose educated young men exact a price for accepting marriage proposals on behalf of girls, the difficulty of selecting suitable matches for girls would be much lessened, if not entirely removed. I must

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insist on the necessity of breaking down the highly injurious caste barriers. Breaking down the barriers will widen the range of choice and thus, in a great measure, prevent exactions.[8]

To the Girl Students

I

YOUR parents do not send you to school to become dolls; on the contrary, you are expected to become Sisters of Mercy. Do not make the mistake of thinking that only those may be called Sisters of Mercy who wear a particular dress. She becomes a Sister of Mercy immediately she thinks less of herself, and more of those who are poorer and more unfortunate than herself. And you have done the work of Sisters of Mercy in giving your mite to the purse that has been presented to me, because that purse has been presented for those who are unfortunately poorer than yourselves.

To give a little bit of money is easy enough, but to do a little thing oneself is more difficult. If you really feel for the people for whom you are giving money, you must go a step further and wear *Khadi* that these people manufacture. If, when *Khadi* is brought before you, you say: '*Khadi* is a bit coarse we cannot wear it', then, I know, you have not the spirit of self-sacrifice in you.

It is such a very nice thing that here* there is no distinction between high class and low class, touchables and untouchables, and if your hearts are also working in that

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*Ramanathan Girls' College, Jaffna.

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direction, and you do not consider yourselves superior to some other girls, it is a very good thing, indeed.

May God bless you![9]

II

I SEE from your time-table that you begin the day by offering worship, all of which is good and elevating; but it may easily amount to a beautiful ceremonial and nothing else, if that worship is not translated day after day into some practical work. So, I say, in order to follow out that act of worship, take up the spinning-wheel, sit at it for half an hour and think of these millions that I have described to you, and say in the name of God: 'I spin for the sake of them'. If you do it with your heart, with the knowledge that you are the humbler and the richer for that real act of devotion, if you will dress not for show, but for covering your limbs, you will certainly not have any hesitation in wearing *Khadi*, and establish that bond between yourselves and the millions.

This is not all that I want to say to the girls of this institution.*

If you will be deserving of the care and attention that is being bestowed on you, you will have to do many more things. I saw in your magazines mention made with some degree of pardonable pride of what some of the old school girls had been doing. I saw notices after this style: So and so married so and so—4 or 5 notices. There is, I know, nothing in a girl who has come of age, about 24 or even 22 years old, in getting married. But I miss in these notices

*Ranjan Prasad Girls' College, Chandigarh.

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a single mention of a girl who had dedicated herself to service only. So, I propose to tell you what I told the girls of H. H. the Maharaja's College for Girls in Bangalore,* that we get a poor return for the great efforts that are being made by educationists and by lavish charities, if you all become mere dolls and disappear from life, as soon as you are discharged from such institutions.

A vast majority of girls disappear from public life as soon as they are discharged from schools and colleges. You, of this institution, have no such business. You have the example of Miss Emery, and the example of others who have been superintending, and who have been, if I am not speaking incorrectly, maidens. Every girl is not born to marry. I can show many girls who are to-day dedicating themselves to service instead of serving one man. It is high time that Hindu girls produce or reproduce an edition and, if possible, a glorified edition of Parvati and Sita.

You claim to be Saivites. You know what Parvati did. She did not spend money for a husband, nor would she allow herself to be bought, and she to-day adorns the Hindu

* Reiterating to the girl students the message of making some return to the poor for the costly education that they were receiving free, Gandhiji said: " If this institution presents India with some heroines, some genuine workers, who will not be lost to the society but who will dedicate themselves to its service, I should be delighted. If, after receiving this costly education, you give me a slip and straightaway marry away and disappear from the horizon, you will have deceived the country. Not that you may not marry. But whether you are married or unmarried, don't be slaves, but do what the country demands of you. You should be the incarnation of mercy and bravery, and go about in the world with the sure shield of purity ever above temptation and without fear."
—*Young India* : August 11, 1927.

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firmament by being classed with one of the Seven *Satis*—not because of the degrees in an educational institution that she received, but because of her unheard of *tapasya* (penance).

Here, I understand that there is a hateful system of dowry, whereby it becomes most difficult for young women to get suitable matches. The grown up girls—some of you are grown up—are expected to resist all such temptations. If you will resist these evil customs, some of you will have to begin by remaining maidens either for life, or at least for a number of years. Then, when it is time for you to marry, and you feel that you must have a partner in life, you will not be in thirst of one who has money or fame, or beauty of person, but you will be in search of one—even as Parvati was—who has got all the matchless qualities which go to make good character. You know how Naradjee described Siva to Parvati—a mere pauper smeared with ashes, no handsomeness about him, and a *Brahmachari*,—and Parvati said: 'Yes, he will be my husband'. You won't have several editions of Siva unless some of you will be content to offer *tapasya*, not for thousands of years as Parvati did. We, frail human beings, cannot afford to do it, but you can do at least during your lifetime.

If you will accept these conditions, you will refuse to disappear into the Kingdom of Dolls, but will aspire to be *Satis* like Parvati, Damayanti, Sita and Savitri. Then, and not till then, in my humble opinion, will you have deserved an institution of this character.

May God fire you with this ambition and, if you are inspired, may He help you to realize this ambition!

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Re-Marriage of Widows

RE-MARRIAGE of widows is necessary to a certain extent. The reform can be brought about only when our youths have purified themselves. Are they pure ? Do they profit by their education? Or, why blame their education? From childhood up, a slave-mentality is sedulously cultivated in us. And if we cannot think freely, how can we act freely? We are alike slaves of the caste, of a foreign education, and of an alien Government. Every one of the facilities provided us have become our fetters. There are so many educated youths amongst us. How few of them have thought of the lot of the widows in their own homes? How few have resisted the temptation of lucre? How few regard them as their own sisters and mothers and protect their honour? How few have had the courage of their convictions and defied their castes to do their worst? Whom is the poor widow to approach? What comfort can I bring here? I would appeal to every one who has a child-widow under his care to consider it his duty to marry her.[11]

Child-Widows

A LEARNED Tamilian has written to me to address students on child-widows. He has said that the hardships of child-widows in his Presidency* are far greater than those of child-widows in other parts of India. I have not been able to test the truth of this statement. You should know that better than I do. But what I would like you, young men around me, to do, is that you should have a touch of chivalry

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*Madras.

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about you. If you have that, I have a great suggestion to offer. I hope the majority of you are unmarried, and a fair number of you are also *Brahmacharis*. I have to say 'a fair number' because I know students; a student who casts his lustful eyes upon his sister is not a *Brahmachari*. I want you to make this sacred resolve that you are not going to marry a girl who is not a widow, you will seek out a widow-girl and, if you cannot get a widow-girl, you are not going to marry at all. Make that determination, announce it to your parents if you have them or to your sisters. I call them widow-girls by way of correction, because I believe that a child ten or fifteen years old who was no consenting party to the so-called marriage, who having married, having never lived with the so-called husband, is suddenly declared to be a widow, is not a widow. It is an abuse of the term, abuse of language and a sacrilege.

The word 'widow' in Hinduism has a sacred odour about it. I am a worshipper of true widow like the late Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, who knew what it was to be a widow. But a child 9 years old knows nothing of what a husband should be. If it is not true that there are such child-widows in the Presidency, then my case falls to the ground. But if there are such child-widows, it becomes your sacred duty to make the determination to marry a girl-widow if you want to rid ourselves of this curse. I am superstitious enough to believe that all such sins that a nation commits react upon it physically. I believe that all these sins of ours have accumulated together to reduce us to a state of slavery. You may get the finest constitution, that is conceivable, dropping upon you from the House of Commons. It will be worthless, if there are not men and women fit enough to work that constitution.

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Do you suppose that we can possibly call ourselves men worthy of ruling ourselves or others, or shaping the destiny of a nation containing 30 crores, so long as there is one single widow who wishes to fulfil her fundamental wants but is violently prevented from doing so? It is not religion, but irreligion. I say that, saturated as I am with the spirit of Hinduism. Do not make the mistake that it is the Western spirit in me that is speaking. I claim to be full to overflowing with the spirit of India undefiled. I have assimilated many things from the West, but not this. There is no warrant for this kind of widowhood in Hinduism.[12]

Whilst there is, and very properly, glorification of real widowhood in Hinduism, there is, so far as I am aware, no warrant for the belief that in the *Vedic* times there was any absolute ban upon re-marriage of widows. But my crusade is not against real widowhood. It is against its atrocious caricature. The better way is not to regard as widows at all the girls I have in view and whom every Hindu, who has a spark of chivalry in him, is bound to relieve from their intolerable yoke. I, therefore, humbly but emphatically repeat the advice to every young Hindu to refuse to marry any but these maidens miscalled widows.[13]

Child-Wives

ALL I have said about child-widows necessarily applies to child-wives. You must be able, surely, to control your lust to this extent, that you are not going to marry a girl that is under 16 years of age. If I could do so, I would lay down 20 as minimum. Twenty years is early enough even in India. It is we who are responsible for the premature [illegible] of girls, not even

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the Indian climate, because I know girls of the age of 20 who are pure and undefiled and able to stand the storm that may rage around. Let us not hug that precocity to ourselves. Some Brahmin students tell me that they cannot get Brahmin girls 16 years old; very few Brahmins keep their daughters unmarried till that age, the Brahmin girls are married mostly before 10, 12 and 13 years. Then, I say to the Brahmin youth: 'Cease to be a Brahmin, if you cannot possibly control yourself. Choose a grown-up girl of 16 who became a widow when she was a child. If you cannot get a Brahmin widow who has reached that age, then go and take any girl you like'. And, I tell you that the God of Hindus will pardon that boy who has preferred to marry out of his caste, rather than ravish a girl of twelve. When your heart is not pure, and you cannot master your passions, you cease to be an educated man.... And what is education without character, and what is character without elementary personal purity? Brahmanism I adore, I have defended *Varnashrama Dharma*. But Brahmanism that can tolerate untouchability, virgin widowhood, spoliation of virgins, stinks in my nostrils. It is a parody of Brahmanism. There is no knowledge of *Brahman* therein. There is no true interpretation of the scriptures. It is undiluted animalism. Brahmanism is made of sterner stuff.

I want these few remarks of mine to go deep into your hearts. You are the hope of the country, and what I have said is of primary importance to you.[14]

Students' Noble Satyagraha

A GENTLEMAN of Dhamraj, some days back, gave a caste dinner in connection with the twelfth day ceremony of the

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death of his mother. It was preceded by a keen controversy about the subject among the young men of the place, who shared with a number of other local inhabitants their strong dislike of this custom. They felt that on this occasion something must be done. Accordingly, most of them took all or some of the following three vows:

i. Not to join their elders at the dinner or otherwise partake of the food served on that occasion.

ii. To observe fast on the day of the dinner as an emphatic protest against this practice.

iii. To bear patiently and cheerfully any harsh treatment that might be accorded to them by their elders for taking this step.

In pursuance of this decision, quite a large number of students, including some children of tender age, fasted on the day on which the dinner was given and took upon themselves the wrath of their so-called elders. Nor was the step free from the danger of serious pecuniary consequences to the students. The 'elders' threatened to stop the allowances of their boys and even to withdraw any financial aid that they were giving to local institutions, but the boys stood firm. As many as two hundred and eighty-five students thus refused to take part in the caste dinner, and most of them fasted.

I tender my congratulations to these boys and hope that everywhere students will take a prominent part in effecting social reform. They hold in their pocket, as it were, the key to social reform and the protection of their religion, just as they have in their possession the key to Swaraj, though they

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may not be aware of it owing to their negligence or carelessness. But I hope that the example set by the students of Dhamraj will awaken them to a sense of their power. In my opinion, the true *Shraddha* of the deceased lady was performed by these young men fasting on that day, while those who gave the dinner wasted good money and set a bad example to the poor. The rich, monied class ought to use their God-given wealth for philanthropic purposes. They should understand that the poor cannot afford to give caste-dinners on wedding or on funeral ceremonies. These bad practices have proved to be the ruin of many a poor man. If the money that was spent in Dhamraj on the caste dinner had been used for helping poor students, or poor widows, or for *Khadi* or cow protection or the amelioration of the 'untouchables', it would have borne fruit and brought peace to the departed soul. But as it is, the dinner has already been forgotten, it has profited nobody and it has caused pain to the students and the sensible section of the Dhamraj public.

Let no one imagine that the *Satyagraha* has gone in vain because it did not succeed in preventing the dinner in question from taking place. The students themselves knew that there was little possibility of their *Satyagraha* producing any immediate tangible result. But we may safely take it that if they do not let their vigilance go to sleep, no *Sethia* will again dare to give a *post-mortem* dinner. A chronic and long standing social evil cannot be swept away at a stroke, it always requires patience and perseverance.

When will the 'elders' of our society learn to recognize the signs of the times? How long will they be slaves to

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custom instead of using it as a means for the amelioration of society and the country? How long will they keep their children divorced from a practical application of the knowledge which they are helping them to acquire ? When will they rescue their sense of right and wrong from its present state of trance and wake up and be *Mahajans* in the true sense of the word?[15]

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CHAPTER IV

STUDENTS AND DUTY TOWARDS PARENTS

I OWE all I am to my parents. I felt towards them as Shravana is said to have done towards his parents... But nowadays it has become the fashion with some young men to adopt the superior attitude and pose as paragons of perfection. In my opinion, the maintenance of one's aged and infirm parents is a first charge upon grown-up sons. They may not marry if they are not in a position to support their parents. They may not take up public work till this primary condition is fulfilled. They must starve so that their parents may be fed and clothed. What, however, young men are not expected to do is to comply with the demand of thoughtless or ignorant parents. Parents have been known to demand money for things not required for sustenance but for false show, or for uncalled-for marriage expenses of daughters. In my opinion, it is the duty of public workers respectfully to refuse to meet such demands. As a matter of fact, I cannot remember having met a single deserving case of starvation of public worker. I have found some living in want. I have found a few who should get more than they are able to give themselves. But as their work prospers and their worth is known, they will not suffer from want. Difficulties and trials make a man. They are a sign of healthy growth. If every young man found himself in plenty, and never knew what it was to go without anything necessary, he may be found wanting when the trial comes. Sacrifice is joy.

Many young men have sacrificed lucrative careers.

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That is certainly to their credit. But even there I should respectfully suggest that praising can well be overdone. No sacrifice is worth the name unless it is a joy. Sacrifice and a long face go ill together.* Sacrifice is 'making sacred'. He must be a poor specimen of humanity who is in need of sympathy for his sacrifice. Buddha renounced everything because he could not help it. To have anything was a torture to him. The Lokmanya† remained poor because it was painful for him to possess riches. Andrews‡ regards the possession of even a few rupees a burden, and continually contrives to lose them if he gets any. I have often told him that he is in need of a caretaker. He listens, he laughs and repeats the same performance without the slightest contrition. *Madar-i-Hind* is a terrible goddess. She will exact the willing, aye, even unwilling sacrifice of many a young man and young woman before she deigns to say : 'Well done, my children. You are now free'. We are as yet playing at sacrifice. The reality has still to come.[1]

Sacrifice

I HAVE before me several letters from young men, complaining that they have so many family burdens that a poor

*"That sacrifice which causes pain loses its sacred character and will break down under stress. One gives up things that one considers to be injurious and, therefore, there should be pleasure attendant upon the giving up. Whether the substitute is effective or not, is a different question altogether. If the substitute is effective, it is no doubt well; but it is well also even if the substitute is ineffective. It must lead to an effort to procure a better substitute, but surely not to a return to what has been given up after full knowledge and experience of its harmful character."

—*Young India* : July 15, 1926.

†Bal Gangadhar Tilak.

‡C. F. Andrews.

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salary they get from public work is totally inadequate for their wants. One, therefore, says he must give up public work and go to Europe by raising a loan or securing a gift and increase his earning capacity; another is in search of a paying job; yet another wants a capital to start a paying business. Every one of these young men is a sound, honest and self-sacrificing worker. But a reaction has set in. Family requirements have increased. *Khadi* or national education does not satisfy them. They do not desire to be a burden upon public service by asking for an increase. But the logical outcome of this attitude of mind must mean, if it becomes at all general, either stoppage of the public service which depends upon the labours of such men and women, or a general indefinite increase which, in its turn, must bring about the same undesirable result.

It was because this process of multiplication of wants out of proportion to our surroundings was discovered to be going on with increasing velocity, that non-co-operation was conceived. And, thus conceived, it was not non-co-operation with persons but with an attitude that was responsible for the system which had seized us in its serpentine coil, and which was reducing us to dust. The system has raised the standard of living among us, its creatures, wholly unwarranted by the general condition of the country. And since India did not live upon exploitation of other peoples, the expansion of the middle-class, who were also the middlemen, meant extinction of the lowest strata. Hence, the smallest villages were dying out through sheer exhaustion. This was all plain to many of us in 1920. The arresting movement is yet in its infancy. Let us not hinder it by any hasty action.

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This artificial increase in our wants has been felt more severely than it otherwise would have been, because of the persistence of the family system which the Western method is ill-designed to support. The joint system having become wooden, its evils have become accentuated. Its sweet graces have disappeared. Thus, evil has been added to evil.*

Our self-sacrifice must, therefore, be in terms of the requirements of the country. The reforms required are more from within than from without. A perfect constitution superimposed upon rotten internal condition will be like a whited sepulchre.

The process of self-purification must, therefore, be completed. The spirit of self-sacrifice must be extended. Great as the sacrifice has been, it is nothing compared to the demands made upon us by the country. We dare not support able-bodied members of the family—men or women —who will not work. We may not contribute a single pice towards the expenses of conforming to meaningless or superstitious customs, such as caste-dinners or towards forming expensive marriage connections. Every marriage and every death brings an unnecessary cruel burden upon the head of the family. We must refuse to regard such acts of self-denial as self-sacrifice. They are evils to be counteracted with courage and resolution.[2]

Under Conscience's Cover

A CORRESPONDENT says in effect: "Do you know what you have done by continually harping on conscience? I find youngsters and grown-up people talking utter nonsense under cover of conscience. What is more, youngsters have become

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impudent and grown-up people unscrupulous; can you not prevent this mischief? If you cannot, please withdraw the word from use and stop the drivel that is being said in the name of that sacred but much abused word. Pray tell us who has a conscience? Do all have it? Do cats have a conscience when they hunt to death poor mice?"

I must confess that the charge is not without substance. But he has presented only the dark side. Every virtue has been known to be abused by the wicked. But we do not on that account do away with virtue. We can but erect safeguards against abuse. When people cease to think for themselves and have everything regulated for them, it becomes necessary at times to assert the right of individuals to act in defiance of public opinion or law, which is another name for public opinion. When individuals so act, they claim to have acted in obedince to their conscience. I entirely agree with the correspondent that youngsters, as a rule, must not pretend to have conscience. It is a quality or a state acquired by laborious training. Wilfulness is not conscience. A child has no conscience. The correspondent's cat does not go for the mouse in obedience to the call of conscience. It does so in obedience to its nature. Conscience is the ripe fruit of strictest discipline. Irresponsible youngsters, therefore, who have never obeyed anything or anybody save their animal instinct, have no conscience; nor, therefore, have all grown-up people. The savages, for instance, have, to all intents and purposes, no conscience. Conscience can reside only in a delicately tuned breast. There is no such thing, therefore, as mass conscience as distinguished from the consciences of individuals. It is safe, therefore, to say that

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when a man makes everything a matter of conscience, he is a stranger to it. It is a truthful saying that "conscience makes cowards of us all." A conscientious man hesitates to assert himself, he is always humble, never boisterous, always ready to listen, ever willing, even anxious, to admit mistakes.

The correspondent is needlessly agitated. What does it matter that fifty thousand people say they act or refrain for conscience's sake? The world has no difficulty in distinguishing between conscience and an arrogant or ignorant assumption of it. Such men would have acted in similar circumstances exactly as they would under cover of conscience. The introduction of conscience into our public life is welcome, even if it has taught a few of us to stand up for human dignity and rights in the face of the heaviest odds. These acts will live for ever, whereas those done under shams are like soap-bubbles enjoying a momentary existence.[3]

What Am I to Do?

A PATIDAR young man writers :

> "My parents want me to be married this very year and insist on my obeying their wishes in this respect.... In my community, no one can secure a bride without conforming to the condition of *Sata i.e.*, without offering a girl of one's family in exchange. Child marriage is the rule. In my case, too, girls of nine or ten years of age only are available and that, too, on the condition that we conform to the condition of *Sata*. My father says that even this may not be possible afterwards, if we miss the opportunity this year. If I say 'no', my mother weeps and creates no end of trouble in the family. I am a Patidar young man of 22 years of age. My parents will not hear of my marrying a widow or outside my caste. What am I to do in the circumstances?"

I know many a young man who is in the same dilemma as this Patidar youth. According to our *Shastras*, a boy of

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16 years and over should be regarded by his parents as a friend whom they should take in their confidence and not as a child whom they can coerce. But some parents in our country seem to think that even their grown-up children are bound to follow every wish of theirs—especially when it relates to such things as marriage—as if they could have no will of their own in the matter. And if this is the attitude with regard to the sons, the plight of the daughters may well be imagined. It seems to me that in all such contingencies, it is not only the right but the religious duty of young men and young girls not to be afraid of the parents' wrath. It has been my experience that when a grown-up boy or girl takes up a just and right position and adheres to it with absolute firmness, there is the least amount of difficulty created by the parents. When once they realize that the resolution of their children is absolutely unalterable, they get reconciled to it. For, behind the parents' insistence there is always the ultimate hope that it would bring their children to their viewpoint. But when this hope is destroyed, then further insistence becomes meaningless and is, therefore, given up. My advice to the young man in question, therefore, is to refuse to be party to the double sin of marrying a child-girl and of conforming to the evil practice of *Sata*. He must not mind how much domestic trouble he has to face as a result of his refusal. He should consider it a virtue to marry outside his sub-caste or to marry a widow subject to the necessary limitation.[4]

A Young Man's Dilemma

Q. I am a young man of 22 years. Is it legitimate for me to refuse to oblige my father in the matter of marriage, if I do not wish to marry?

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A. According to the *Shastras* and also reason, children, when they reach the age of discretion, which the former prescribe as 16, become their parents' friends, *i.e.*, are free from parental dictation. They are still bound to consult them and defer to their wishes whenever they can. You are full-grown, and in a matter so vital as marriage, you should respectfully refuse to marry if the match is not to your liking or for any other valid reason.[5]

Students should develop sufficient strength of purpose to resist any marriage that is sought to be forced on them. Students should learn the art of standing alone and resisting in every legitimate manner any attempt to force them to do anything against their will, much more so to marry against their will.[6]

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CHAPTER V

STUDENTS AND SEX EDUCATION

OUR *Shastras* say that a boy who would keep his body fit and strong and make the best use of it should observe *Brahmacharya*. I have travelled all over the country and one of the most deplorable things I have noticed is the rickety bodies of young men. So long as we labour under the curse of child-marriage, and so long as many members of our society are children of such marriages, so long much bodily exercise is an impossibility. Who will recommend physical exercise to consumptives? We should, therefore, lay the axe at the root of this curse, if we would like to see our young men and women strong and healthy and India on the path of vigorous and healthy growth. Manu has laid down that a student should observe *Brahmacharya* up to his 25th year at least. All physical exercise will be futile so long as these conditions are not satisfied.[1]

It (*Brahmacharya*) is as easy as it appears to be difficult, for *Brahmacharya* is a quality of the soul, and your souls are not dead but slumbering. They are only waiting to be aroused. It seems difficult to arouse them because we have become unbelievers. It will be easy as soon as you have faith, for with faith comes God's grace. Then it no longer remains a matter of effort and trouble, but of joy and peace. I tell you this as I have known the joy of it.[2]

Devote yourselves entirely to your duties. Youth is given to us to conquer passions. We should not allow it to pass away fruitlessly. Safeguard your purity.[3]

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The Choice Before Our Youth

THE choice before our youth to-day lies between the way of self-restraint and the way of indulgence and ease; the one leading to salvation and freedom, the other to utter destruction. They are at the parting of the ways. Literature, full of the virus of self-indulgence served out in attractive forms, is flooding this country from the West; and there is the greatest need for our youth to be on their guard. The present is for them an age of transition, of ideals and of ordeals; and the one thing needful for the world, its youth, and particularly the youth of India in this crisis, is Tolstoy's progressive self-restraint; for, it alone can lead to true freedom for themselves, the country and the world.

The test of the youth lies before them, and that is to win their diploma from the University of Life, with its snares and pitfalls and ordeals, without which their academic degrees will be in vain.

A man who adopts service as his ideal will go on curbing his carnal appetite more and more; and though, as in the case of Tolstoy, the attainment of full self-restraint may seem always as far away as ever, he will never cease to persevere in it and regard such perseverance as the *summum bonum* of life. Firhad in his quest of Shirin wore away his life in breaking rocks. Shall we do less for our Shirin of Truth, without which service is not?[4]

Erotic Literature

TO-DAY, a plethora of highly objectionable erotic litera-

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there are some who say that, barring the erotic, there is no other *rasa* worth the name; and because the erotic is at a premium, those who insist on restraint in literature are held up to ridicule as devoid of all *rasa*. They forget that even those who are said to sacrifice everything do not sacrifice *rasa*. Each one of us feeds himself on some *rasa* or sacred passion. Dadabhai Naoroji sacrificed everything for the country, but he was fired by the sacred passion of patriotism. That gave him all his inner happiness. To say that Chaitanya was devoid of *rasa* is to confess innocence of all *rasa*. Narasinha Mehta, the poet-saint of Gujarat, has described himself as a *bhogi*, but his *bhoga* was that of single-minded devotion to God. If you will not be annoyed, I would go the length of saying that the erotic is the lowest of all *rasa*, and when it partakes of the obscene it is wholly to be eschewed.[5]

Plight of School Children

ONE who knows what she is writing about says :

> "Until our boys learn to conserve their vital forces, India will never have the men she should have. For nearly 17 years, I have had change of boys' schools in India. It is appalling to see the number of boys—Hindu, Mohammedan and Christian who begin school-life full of energy and enthusiasm and hope and end it in physical wrecks. In literally hundreds of cases, I have traced this directly to self-abuse, sodomy or early marriage. I have to-day the names of 42 boys of sodomy and not a boy is over 13 years of age. Masters and house fathers will deny that these conditions exist; but if the right tactics are used, the trouble will be discovered and nearly always the boys will confess. A large per cent of the boys do confess having been taught by them, often their own relatives."

This is no fanciful picture. It is truth suppressed by many school masters who know. The mischief is not confined to India. But it comes upon India with deadlier effect

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because of the curse of child-marriage. A public discussion of this very difficult and delicate subject has become necessary because one sees in respectable newspapers the sexual passion discussed with a freedom that would not have been possible a few years back.

The fashion of regarding the sexual act as natural, necessary, moral and conducive to mental and physical health has accentuated the evil. The advocacy by the cultured men of the free use of contraceptives has created an atmosphere favouring the growth of the sexual microbe. The tender and receptive minds of youngsters draw the hasty deductions favouring and justifying their unlawful and destructive desires and the parents and the teachers exhibit a sad, almost criminal, indifference and tolerance in respect of the deadly vice. Short of complete purification of the social environment, nothing, in my opinion, will stop evil. The unconscious and subtle effect of an atmosphere charged with sexuality cannot but react upon the minds of the school-going youth of the country. The surroundings of the city life, the literature, the drama, the cinema, the household appointments, various social ceremonies do but to point one thing—the promotion of the sexual passion.* It is impossible for little children, conscious

*" Whatever may be the *pros* and *cons* of going to the public theatre, it is a patent fact that it has undermined the morals and ruined the character of many a youth in this country. Look around you. We are situated in the midst of a raging fire. The cinema, the stage, the race-course, the drink-booth and the opium-den, all these enemies of society that have sprung up under the fostering influence of the present system threaten us on all sides. Is it any wonder, then, that I have not hesitated to call the present system Satanic ? My advice to you, therefore, is : Beware of pitfalls."

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of the beast within, to resist the pressure exerted by these influences. Palliatives will not answer. The reformation must begin with the elders, if they would discharge their trust by the younger generation.[6]

Sexual Perversion

UNNATURAL though the vice is, it has come down to us from times immemorial. The remedy for all secret vice is most difficult to find. And it becomes still more difficult when it affects guardians of boys which the teachers are. "If the salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted." In my opinion, departmental action, necessary as it is in all proved cases, can hardly meet the case. The levelling up of public opinion alone can cope with the evil. But in most matters there is no such thing as effective public in this country. The feeling of helplessness that pervades political life has affected all other departments. We, therefore, pass by many a wrong that is being perpetrated in front of us.

A system of education that puts an exclusive emphasis on literary equipment not only is ill-adapted to deal with the evil but actually results in promoting it. Boys who were clean before they went to public schools, have been found to have become unclean, effeminate and imbecile at the end of their school course. The Bihar Committee has recommended the "instilling into the minds of boys a reverence for religion." But who is to bell the cat? The teachers alone can teach reverence for religion. But they themselves have none. It is, therefore, a question of a proper selection of each. But a proper selection of teachers means either a much higher pay than is now given or reversion to

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teaching not as a career, but as a life-long dedication to a sacred duty. This is in vogue even to-day among Roman Catholics. The first is obviously impossible in a poor country like ours. The second seems to me to be the only course left open. But that course is not open to us under a system of Government in which everything has a price and which is the costliest in the world.

The difficulty of coping with the evil is aggravated because the parents generally take no interest in the morals of their children. Their duty is done when they send them to school. The outlook before us is thus gloomy. But there is hope in the fact that there is only one remedy for all evil, *viz.*, general purification. Instead of being overwhelmed by the magnitude of the evil, each one of us must do the best one can by the scrupulous attention to one's own immediate surroundings, taking self as the first and the immediate point of attack. We need not hug the comfort to ourselves that we are not like other men. Unnatural vice is not an isolated phenomenon. It is but a violent symptom of the same disease. If we have impurity within us, if we are sexually depraved, we must right ourselves before expecting to reform our neighbours. There is too much sitting in judgement upon others and too much indulgence towards self. The result is a vicious circle. Those who realize the truth of it must get out of it and they will find that progress, though never easy, becomes sensibly possible.[7]

For the Young

IT IS the fashion in some quarters now-a-days for the young to discredit whatever may be said by old people. I am not prepared to say that there is absolutely no justi-

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fication for this belief. But I warn the youth of the country against always discounting whatever old men or women may say, for the mere fact that it is said by such persons. Even as wisdom often comes from the mouths of babes, so does it often come from the mouths of old people. The golden rule is to test everything in the light of reason and experience, no matter from whom it comes. I want to revert to the subject of birth control by contraceptives.

It is dinned into one's ears that gratification of the sex-urge is a solemn obligation, like the obligation of discharging debts lawfully incurred, and that not to do so would involve the penalty of intellectual decay. This sex-urge has been isolated from the desire for progeny, and it is said by the protagonists of the use of contraceptives that conception is an accident to be prevented, except when the parties desire to have children. I venture to suggest that this is a most dangerous doctrine to preach anywhere; much more so in a country like India, where the middle class male population has become imbecile through abuse of the creative function. If satisfaction of the sex-urge is a duty, the unnatural vice (sodomy) of which I wrote some time ago, and several other ways of gratification, would be commendable. The reader should know that even persons of note have been known to approve of, what is commonly known as, sexual perversion. He may be shocked at the statement. But if it, somehow or the other, gains the stamp of respectability, it will be the rage among boys and girls to satisfy their urge among members of their own sex. For me, the use of contraceptives is not far removed from the means to which persons have hitherto resorted for the gratification of their sexual desire, with the results that very few know.

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I know what havocs secret vice has played among school boys and school girls. The introduction of contraceptives, under the name of science and the *imprimatur* of known leaders of society, has intensified complication and made the task of reformers, who work for purity of social life, well-nigh impossible for the moment. I betray no confidence when I inform the readers that there are unmarried girls of impressionable age studying in schools and colleges who study birth control literature and magazines with avidity, and even possess contraceptives. It is impossible to confine their use to married women. Marriage loses its sanctity when its purpose and highest use is conceived to be the satisfaction of the animal passion, without contemplating the natural result of such satisfaction.

I have no doubt that those learned men and women, who are carrying on propaganda with missionary zeal in favour of the use of contraceptives, are doing irreparable harm to the youth of the country, under the false belief that they will be saving thereby the poor women who may be obliged to bear children against their will. Those who need to limit their children will not be easily reached by them. Our poor women have not the knowledge or the training that the women of the West have. Surely, the propaganda is not carried on on behalf of middle-class women, for they do not need the knowledge, at any rate, so much as the poor classes do.

The greatest harm, however, done by that propaganda lies in its rejection of the old ideal and substitution in its place of one which, if carried out, must spell the moral and physical extinction of the race. The horror, with which ancient

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literature has regarded fruitless use of the vital fluid, was not a superstition born of ignorance. What shall we say of a husbandman, who will sow the finest seed in his possession on stony ground, or of the owner of a field, who will receive in his field, rich with fine soil, good seed under conditions that will make it impossible for it to grow? God has blessed man with seed that has the highest potency, and woman with a field richer than the richest earth to be found anywhere on this globe. Surely, it is criminal folly for man to allow his most precious possession to run to waste. He must guard it with a care greater than he will bestow upon the richest pearls in his possession. And so is a woman guilty of criminal folly, who will receive the seed in her life-producing field with the deliberate intention of letting it run to waste. Both he and she will be judged guilty of misuse of the talents given to them, and they will be dispossessed of what they have been given. Sex-urge is a fine and noble thing. There is nothing to be ashamed of in it. But it is meant only for the act of creation. Any other use of it, is a sin against God and humanity. Contraceptives of a kind there were before, and there will be hereafter, but the use of them was formerly regarded as sinful. It was reserved for our generation to glorify vice by calling it virtue. The greatest disservice protagonists of contraceptives are rendering to the youth of India, is to fill their minds with what appears to me to be wrong ideology. Let the young men and women of India, who hold her destiny in their hands, beware of this false god, and guard the treasure with which God has blessed them and use it, if they wish, for the only purpose for which it is intended.

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Sex Education

SEX complex is to-day steadily gaining ground in Gujarat, as in the rest of India. And what is more, those who fall under its sway feel as if there is something meritorious about it. When a slave begins to take pride in his fetters and hugs them like precious ornaments, the triumph of the slave-owner is complete. But this success of Cupid, spectacular though it may be, will, I am convinced, prove to be short-lived and ignoble, and at long last end in inanition, even like a scorpion whose venom is spent. But that does not mean that we can, in the meantime, afford to sit with folded hands. The certainty of its defeat need not, must not, lull us into a false sense of security. The conquest of lust is the highest endeavour of a man or woman's existence. Without overcoming lust, man cannot hope to rule over self. And without rule over self, there can be no *Swaraj* or *Ram Raj*. Rule of all without rule of oneself, would prove to be as deceptive and disappointing as a painted toy mango, charming to look at outwardly but hollow and empty from within. No worker, who has not overcome lust, can hope to render any genuine service to the cause of Harijans, communal unity, *Khadi*, cow-protection or village reconstruction. Great causes like these cannot be served by intellectual equipment alone, they call for spiritual effort or soul-force. Soul-force comes only through God's grace, and God's grace never descends upon a man who is a slave to lust.

What place then, has instruction in Sexual Science in our educational system, or has it any place there at all ? Sexual Science is of two kinds, that which is used for controlling or overcoming the sexual passion, and that which is

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used to stimulate and feed it. Instruction in the former is as necessary a part of a child's education as the latter is harmful and dangerous, and fit, therefore, only to be shunned. All great religions have rightly regarded *Kama* as the arch-enemy of man, anger or hatred coming only in the second place. According to the *Gita*, the latter is an offspring of the former. The *Gita*, of course, uses the word *Kama* in its wider sense of desire. But the same holds good of the narrow sense in which it is used here.

This, however, still leaves unanswered the question, *i.e.*, whether it is desirable to impart to young pupils a knowledge about the use and function of generative organs. It seems to me that it is necessary to impart such knowledge to a certain extent. At present, they are often left to pick up such knowledge anyhow, with the result that they are misled into abusive practices. We cannot properly control or conquer the sexual passion by turning a blind eye to it. I am, therefore, strongly in favour of teaching young boys and girls the significance and right use of their generative organs. And, in my own way, I have tried to impart this knowledge to young children of both sexes, for whose training I was responsible.

But the sex education that I stand for, must have for its object the conquest and sublimation of the sex passion. Such education should automatically serve to bring home to children the essential distinction between man and brute, to make them realize that it is man's special privilege and pride to be gifted with the faculties of head and heart both, that he is a thinking no less than a feeling animal, as the very derivation of the word 'man' shows; and to renounce

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the sovereignty of reason over the blind instincts is, therefore, to renounce a man's estate. In man, reason quickens and guides the feeling; in brute, the soul lies ever dormant. To awaken the heart is to awaken the dormant soul, to awaken reason, and to inculcate discrimination between good and evil.

Who should teach this true Science of Sex? Clearly, he who has attained mastery over his passions. To teach Astronomy and kindred sciences, we have teachers who have gone through a course of training in them, and are masters of their art. Even so, must we have as teachers of Sexual Science, *i.e.*, the Science of Sex Control, those who have studied it and have acquired mastery over self. Even a lofty utterance, that has not the backing of sincerity and experience, will be inert and lifeless, and will utterly fail to penetrate and quicken the hearts of men, while the speech that springs from self-realization and genuine experience is always fruitful.

To-day our entire environment—our reading, our thinking, and social behaviour—is generally calculated to subserve and cater for the sex-urge. To break through its coils is no easy task. But it is a task worthy of our highest endeavour. Even if there are a handful of teachers endowed with practical experience, who accept the ideal of attaining self-control as the highest duty of man, and are fired by a genuine and undying faith in their mission, and are sleeplessly vigilant and active, their labour will light the path of the children of Gujarat, save the unwary from falling into the mire of sexuality, and rescue those who might be already engulfed in it.

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Co-education and Sex Hygiene

Mrs. Nair : Do you not think that co-education from very early days till the end of the educational career will help a great deal in removing the sex obsession that we see in our midst to-day?

Gandhiji : I cannot definitely state as yet whether it would be successful or not. It does not seem to have succeeded in the West. I tried it myself years ago when I even made boys and girls sleep in the same *verandah* with no partition between them; Mrs. Gandhi and myself sharing the *verandah* with them. I must say that it brought about undesirable results.

Mrs. Nair : But do not worse things happen in *purdah*-ridden communities?

Gandhiji : Yes, of course ; but co-education is still in an experimental stage and we cannot definitely say one way or the other as to its results. I think that we should begin with the family first. There, boys and girls should grow together freely and naturally. Then, co-education will come by itself.

Mrs. Nair : As a teacher, who has moved rather intimately with her students, I have had occasion to come across some, who through ignorance and through information gathered from unhealthy sources during the period of adolescence, resorted to practices that were not conducive either to their physical or moral well-being. Will not the teaching of sex hygiene in schools in the most scientific and informal manner, be really beneficial to our boys and girls?

Gandhiji : Yes. And there should be no reason why one should not be able to talk freely on this matter.[10]

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A Student's Perplexity

HERE is an extract from a pupil's letter to his teacher who sends it to me for comment :

"Two things completely possess me : my nationalism and my overbearing carnal passions. These always create seeming contradictions in my behaviour, and inconsistency in my decisions. I want to be the first servant of my country and, at the same time, enjoy the physical pleasures of the world. I must confess, I do not believe in God although I am sometimes terribly afraid of Him. All existence seems to me to be an enigma. I do not know what awaits me at the end. I have seen dead bodies burning : my mother's was the last, and the scene influenced me terribly. I cannot bear to think that such shall be my fate. I feel sick at the sight of a wound ; and to think that my body shall burn one day ! I know, there is no escape. To me, there does not seem to be any life beyond. That is why I am afraid.

"There are only two courses open to me : either to brood over it and pine away, or to enjoy the physical pleasures of the world, be lost in them and forget the end. I confess (I have confessed to you things which I have never confessed to anybody else) that I have chosen the latter course.

"This world is the only reality ; its joys are worth having for anything. Feeling for my wife, who died recently, was genuine feeling ; but that feeling was not because she was dead, but because I was left alone. For the dead, there are no problems ; for the living, there are all. I do not believe in any pure love ; the so-called love is nothing but sex. If there were anything like pure love, I should have felt more attachment for my parents than for my wife ; but reverse was the case. I have been a loyal husband, but I could not have assured my wife that I would feel for her even after her death. My feeling would perhaps arise from the inconvenience that her passing might cause me. You might call this cynicism, but there it is.... Please write to me and guide me."

This extract covers three things. (1) Conflict between carnal desire and nationalism, (2) God and future life, and (3) Undefiled love and sex.

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The first is well stated. Carnal desire was the reality, nationalism was the fashion of the day. Nationalism, in the sense of power politics, is quite consistent with satisfaction of carnal desire. Instances from life can be multiplied. I have in mind nationalism in the sense of a burning love for the nation, including ' this last '. It must burn as it always has burnt carnal desire and the like.... Thus, there is no conflict but always victory of the latter over the former. All-embracing love of the nation leaves not a minute for any occupation that interferes with that ruling pursuit. He is lost who is possessed by carnal desire.

Uncertain faith in God and the future springs from the lust for life. This unhinges a man or a woman. Indecision consumes him or her. Faith in God will live when the animal passion dies. The two cannot co-exist.

The third enigma is a mere restatement of the first. Undefiled love between husband and wife takes one nearer God than any other love. When sex is mixed with the undefiled love, it takes one away from one's Maker. Hence, if there be no sex consciousness and sexual contact, it is a question whether there is any occasion for marriage. The pupil truly says that there was no unselfish love felt for his wife. Had it been unselfish, death of life's partner would have enriched life, for the memory of the disembodied partner would have resulted in greater dedication to the service of down-trodden humanity.[11]

The Healing Balm

Dr. Mott : What counsel do you give to the young men who are fighting a losing battle with their lower selves and come to you for advice ?

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Gandhiji : Simply prayer. One must humble oneself utterly and look beyond oneself for strength.

Dr. Mott : But what if the young men complain that their prayer is not heard, that they feel like speaking to brass heavens as it were ?

Gandhiji : To want an answer to one's prayer is to tempt God. If prayer fails to bring relief, it is only lip prayer. If prayer does not help, nothing else will. One must go on ceaselessly. This, then, is my message to the youth. In spite of themselves, the youth must believe in the all-conquering power of Love and Truth.

Dr. Mott : The difficulty with our youth is that the study of science and modern philosophy has demolished their faith and so they are burnt up by the fire of disbelief.

Gandhiji : That is due to the fact, that with them faith is an effort of the intellect, not an experience of the soul. Intellect takes us along in the battle of life to a certain limit, but at the crucial moment it fails us. Faith transcends reason. It is when the horizon is the darkest and human reason is beaten down to the ground, that faith shines brightest and comes to our rescue. It is such faith that our youth require, and this comes when one has shed all pride of intellect and surrendered oneself entirely to His will ? [12]

Cleanliness of the Mind and Body

CLEANLINESS of the mind and body is the first step in education. Prayer does for the purification of the mind what the bucket and the broom do for the cleaning up of our physical surroundings. No matter whether the prayer we recite is the Hindu prayer or the Muslim or the Parsi, its function is essentially the same, namely, purification of the heart. God

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has innumerable names, but the most beautiful and suitable, in my opinion, is Truth. Let Truth, therefore, rule every action of our life, be it ever so insignificant. If we eat only to sustain the body as an instrument of His service, not only will it make our bodies and minds healthy and clean, but the inner cleanliness will be reflected in our surroundings also. We must learn to make our latrines as clean as our kitchens.

As with the individual, so with society. The various functions in the human body have their parallel in the corporate life of society. What I have said about the inner and outer cleanliness of the individual, therefore, applies to the whole society. In the mighty world, man, considered as an animal, occupies but an insignificant place. Physically, he is a contemptible worm. But God has endowed him with intellect and the faculty of discrimination between good and evil. If we use this faculty to know God, we become a power for good. Abuse of that talent converts us into an instrument of evil, so that we become like scourge and a plague and fill this earth with strife and bloodshed, and unhappiness and misery.

The struggle between the forces of good and evil is ceaseless and eternal. The former have Truth and *Ahimsa* as weapons against the latter's falsehood, violence and brute force. There is nothing more potent in the universe than God's Name. If we enthrone Him in our hearts and keep Him there always, we shall know no fear and lay for ourselves rich treasure in life.[13]

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CHAPTER VI

STUDENTS AND PRAYER

PRAYER means asking God for something in a reverent attitude. But the word is used also to denote any devotional act. Worship is a better term to use.

But definition apart, what is it that millions of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Jews and others do every day during the time set apart for the adoration of the Maker ? It seems to me that it is a yearning of the heart to be one with the Maker, an invocation for His blessing. It is in this case the attitude that matters, not words uttered or muttered. Often, the association of words that have been handed down from ancient times has an effect which, in their rendering into one's mother-tongue, they will lose altogether. Thus the *Gayatri* translated and recited in, say, Gujarati, will not have the same effect as the original. The utterance of the word *Rama* will instantaneously affect millions of Hindus when the word God, although they may understand the meaning, will leave them untouched. Words, after all, acquire a power by a long usage and sacredness associated with their use. There is much, therefore, to be said for the retention of the old Sanskrit formula for the most prevalent *mantras* or verses. That the meaning of them should be properly understood goes without saying.

There can be no fixed rule laid down as to the time these devotional acts should take. It depends upon individual temperament. These are precious moments in one's daily life. The exercises are intended to sober and humble us, and enable us to realize that nothing happens without His

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will, and that we are but 'clay in the hands of the Potter'. These are moments when one reviews his immediate past confessing one's weakness, asks for forgiveness and strength to be and do better. One minute may be enough for some, twenty-four hours may be too little for others. For those who are filled with the presence of God in them, to labour is to pray. Their life is one continuous prayer, or act of worship. For those others who act only to sin, to indulge themselves and live for self, no time is too much. If they had patience and faith and the will to be pure, they would pray till they feel the definite purifying presence of God within them. For us ordinary mortals, there must be a middle path between these two extremes. We are not so exalted as to be able to say that all our acts are a dedication, nor perhaps are we so far gone as to be living purely for self. Hence have all religions set apart times for general devotion. Unfortunately, these have now-a-days become merely mechanical and formal, where they are not hypocritical. What is necessary, therefore, is the correct attitude to accompany these devotions.

For definite personal prayer, in the sense of asking God for something, it should be certainly in one's own tongue. Nothing can be grander than to ask God to make us act justly towards everything that lives.[1]

No Faith in Prayer

HERE is a letter written by a student to the Principal of a national institution, asking to be excused from attending its prayer meetings :

> "I beg to state that I have no belief in prayer, as I do not believe in anything known as God to which I should pray. I never feel any necessity of supposing a God for myself. What do I know of I do not care for Him, and calmly and sincerely work my own schemes?

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"So far as congregational prayer is concerned, it is of no use. Can such a huge mass of men enter into any mental concentration upon a thing, however trifling it may be ?....Can love for the so-called Lord take its root in the hearts of boys by any such mechanical function ?....Let those pray who have a taste for it and those avoid who dislike it. Anything done without conviction is an immoral and degrading action."

Let us first examine the worth of the last idea. Is it an immoral and degrading act to submit to a discipline before one begins to have conviction about its necessity ? Is it immoral and degrading to study subjects according to the school syllabus, if one has no conviction about its utility ? May a boy be excused from studying his vernacular if he has persuaded himself that it is useless ? Is it not truer to say that a school boy has no conviction about the things he has to learn, or the discipline he has to go through ? His choice is exhausted, if he had it, when he elected to belong to an institution. His joining one means that he will willingly submit to its rules and regulations. It is open to him to leave it, but he may not choose what or how he will learn. It is for teachers to make attractive and intelligible what to the pupils may, at first, appear repulsive or uninteresting.

It is easy enough to say : 'I do not believe in God'. For, God permits all things to be said of Him with impunity. He looks at our acts. And any breach of His Law carries with it, not its vindictive, but its purifying, compelling punishnent. God's existence cannot be, does not need to be, proved. God *is*. If He is not felt, so much the worse for us. The absence of feeling is a disease which we shall some day throw off *nolens volens*.

Prayer is not an asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is a daily admission of one's weakness. The tallest among us has a perpetual reminder of his nothingness before death,

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disease, old age, accidents etc. We are living in the midst of death. What is the value of 'working for our own schemes' when they might be reduced to naught in the twinkling of an eye, or when we may, equally swiftly and unawares, be taken away from them ? But we may feel strong as a rock, if we could truthfully say : 'We work for God and His schemes'. Then, all is as clear as day-light. Then, nothing perishes. All perishing is, then, only what seems. Death and destruction have *then, but only then*, no reality about them. For, death or destruction is then but a change. An artist destroys his picture for creating a better one. A watch-maker throws away a bad spring to put in a new and a useful one.

A congregational prayer is a mighty thing. What we do not often do alone, we do together. Boys do not need conviction. If they merely attend in obedience to the call to prayer, without inward resistance, they feel the exaltation. But many do not. They are even mischievous. All the same, the unconscious effect cannot be resisted. Are there not boys who, at the commencement of their career, were scoffers, but who subsequently became mighty believers in the efficacy of congregational prayer ? It is a common experience for men, who have no robust faith, to seek the comfort of congregational prayer. All who flock to churches, temples, or mosques are not scoffers or humbugs. They are honest men and women. For them congregational prayer is like a daily bath, a necessity their existence These places of worship are not a mere idle superstition to be swept away at the first opportunity. They have survived all attacks up to now, and are likely to persist to the end of time.[2]

A Discourse on Prayer

I BELIEVE that prayer is the very soul and essence of religion, and therefore, prayer must be the very core of the

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life of man, for no man can live without religion. There are some who, in the egotism of their reason, declare that they have nothing to do with religion. But it is like a man saying that he breathes, but that he has no nose. Whether by reason, or by instinct, or by superstition, man acknowledges some sort of relationship with the Divine. The rankest agnostic or atheist does acknowledge the need of moral principle, and associates something good with its observance and something bad with its non-observance. Bradlaugh, whose atheism is well-known, always insisted on proclaiming his innermost conviction. He had to suffer a lot for thus speaking the truth, but he delighted in it and said that truth is its own reward. Not that he was quite insensible to the joy resulting from the observance of truth. This joy, however, is not at all worldly, but springs out of communion with the Divine. That is why I have said that even a man who disowns religion cannot, and does not, live without religion.

Now, I come to the next thing, *viz.*, that prayer is the very core of man's life, as it is the most vital part of religion. Prayer is either petitional, or, in its wider sense, is inward communion. In either case, the ultimate result is the same. Even when it is petitional, the petition should be for the cleansing and purification of the soul, for freeing it from the layers of ignorance and darkness that envelop it. He, therefore, who hungers for the awakening of the Divine in him, must fall back on prayer.

But prayer is no mere exercise of words or of the ears, it is no mere repetition of empty formula. Any amount of repetition of *Ramanama* is futile, if it fails to stir the soul. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words, than

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words without a heart. It must be in clear response to the spirit which hungers for it. And even as a hungry man relishes a hearty meal, a hungry soul will relish heart-felt prayer. And I am giving you a bit of my experience, and that of my companions, when I say that he who has experienced the magic of prayer may do without food for days together, but not a single moment without prayer. For, without prayer there is no inward peace.

If that is the case, someone will say, we should be offering our prayers every minute of our lives. There is no doubt about it. But we erring mortals, who find it difficult to retire within ourselves for inward communion even for a single moment, will find it impossible to remain perpetually in communion with the Divine. We, therefore, fix some hours when we make a serious effort to throw off the attachments of the world for a while, we make a serious endeavour to remain, so to say, out of the flesh. You have heard Surdas' hymn.* It is the passionate cry of a soul hungering for union with the Divine. According to our standards, he was a saint; but according to his own, he was a proclaimed sinner. Spiritually, he was miles ahead of us, but he felt the separation from the Divine so keenly that he has uttered that anguished cry in loathing and despair.

I have talked of the necessity for prayer, and therethrough I have dealt with the essence of prayer. We are born to serve our fellow-men, and we cannot properly do so unless we are wide awake. There is an eternal struggle raging in man's

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*" Where is there a wretch
So loathsome and wicked as I ?
I have forsaken my Maker,
So lightless have I been.

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breast between the powers of darkness and of light, and he, who has not the sheet-anchor of prayer to rely upon, will be a victim to the powers of darkness. The man of prayer will be at peace with himself and with the whole world; the man who goes about the affairs of the world, without a prayerful heart, will be miserable and will make the world also miserable. Apart, therefore, from its bearing on man's condition after death, prayer has incalculable value for man in this world of the living. Prayer is the only means of bringing about orderliness and peace and repose in our daily acts. Take care of the vital thing and other things will take care of themselves. Rectify one angle of square, and the other angles will automatically be right.

Begin, therefore, your day with prayer, and make it so soulful that it may remain with you until the evening. Close the day with prayer, so that you may have a peaceful night free from dreams and nightmares. But no worry about the form of prayer. Let it be any form; it should be such as can put us in communion with the Divine. Only, whatever be the form, let not the spirit wander while the words of prayer run on out of your mouth.

If what I have said has gone home to you, you will not be at peace until you have compelled your Hostel Superintendents to interest themselves in your prayer and to make it obligatory. Restraint self-imposed is no compulsion. A man, who chooses the path of freedom from restraint, *i.e.*, of self-indulgence, will be a bondslave of passions ; whilst the man who binds himself to rules and restraints releases himself. All things in the universe, including the sun and the moon and the stars, obey certain laws. Without the restraining

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influence of these laws, the world would not go on for a single moment. You, whose mission in life is service of your fellow-men, will go to pieces if you do not impose on your selves some sort of discipline, and prayer is a necessary spiritual discipline. It is discipline and restraint that separates us from the brute. If we will be men walking with our heads erect and not walking on all fours, let us understand and put ourselves under voluntary discipline and restraint.[3]

Personal Testimony on Prayer

PRAYER has been the saving of my life. Without it, I should have been a lunatic long ago. My autobiography will tell you, that I have had my fair share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair, but if I was able to get rid of it, it was because of prayer. Now I may tell you, that prayer has not been part of my life in the sense that truth has been. It came out of sheer necessity, as I found myself in a plight when I could not possibly be happy without it. And, as time went on, my faith in God increased, and the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it. I had attended the Christian service in South Africa, but it had failed to grip me. I could not join them in prayer. They supplicated God, but I could not do so, I failed egregiously. I started with disbelief in God and prayer, and until at a late stage in life I did not feel anything like a void in life. But at that stage I felt that as food was indispensable for the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul. In fact, food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary in order to keep the body in health, but there is nothing as

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prayer-starvation. You cannot possibly have a surfeit of prayer.

Three of the greatest teachers of the world—Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed—have left unimpeachable testimony that they found illumination through prayer and could not possibly live without it. But, to come nearer home. Millions of Hindus and Mussalmans and Christians find their only solace in life in prayer. Either you vote them down as liars or self-deluded people. Well, then, I will say, that this lying has a charm for me, a Truth-seeker, if it is 'lying' that has given me that mainstay or staff of life, without which I could not bear to live for a moment.

In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact, I have found people who envy my peace. That peace, I tell you, comes from prayer. I am not a man of learning, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Everyone is a law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well-marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks, trodden by the ancient teachers. Well, I have given my personal testimony. Let everyone try and find, that as a result of daily prayer he adds something new to his life, something with which nothing can be compared.[4]

Influence of Music

A STUDENT of the Gujarat Vidyapith asks :

"What has been the influence of music on your life ?"

Music has given me peace. I can remember occasions when music instantly tranquillized my mind when I was greatly agitated over something. Music has helped me to overcome anger. I can recall occasions when a hymn had

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deep into me, though the same thing expressed in prose had failed to touch me. I also found that the meaning of hymns discordantly sung has failed to come home to me, and that it burns itself on my mind when they have been properly sung. When I hear *Gita* verses melodiously recited I never grow weary of hearing, and the more I hear the deeper sinks the meaning into my heart. Melodious recitations of the *Ramayana*, which I heard in my childhood, left on me an impression which years have not obliterated or weakened. I distinctly remember how when once the hymn '*The path of the Lord is meant for the brave, not the coward*', was sung to me in an extraordinarily sweet tune, it moved me as it had never before. In 1907, while in the Transvaal, I was almost fatally assaulted, the pain of the wounds was relieved when, at my instance, Olive Doke gently sang to me '*Lead kindly Light*'.

Let no one infer from this that I know music. On the contrary, it would be more correct to say that my knowledge of music is very elementary. I cannot critically judge music. All I can claim is that I have a natural ear for good, homely music.

I do not mean to suggest either that because the influence of music has been uniformly good on me, it must act similarly on others. On the contrary, I know that many people employ music to feed their carnal passions. To sum up, therefore, we may say that the influence of music will differ according to temperaments. As Tulsidas has sung :

> "The Lord of Creation created everything in this world as an admixture of good and evil. But good man selects the good and rejects the evil, even as the fabled swan is said to help himself to cream leaving the water in the milk".

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CHAPTER VII

STUDENTS AND THE GITA

THE other day, in the course of a conversation, a missionary friend asked me if India was really a spiritually advanced country, why it was that he found only a few students having any knowledge of their own religion, even of the *Bhagavad Gita*. In support of the statement the friend, who is himself an educationist, told me that he had made it a point to ask the students he met, if they had any knowledge of their religion or of the *Bhagavad Gita*. A vast majority of them were found to be innocent of any such knowledge.

I do not propose to take up, at the present moment, the inference, that because certain students had no knowledge of their own religion, India was not a spiritually advanced country, beyond saying that the ignorance on the part of the students of religious books did not necessarily mean absence of all religious life, or want of spirituality among the people to which the students belonged. But there is no doubt that the vast majority of students, who pass through the Government educational institutions, are devoid of any religious instruction.* The remark of the missionary had reference to the Mysore students, and I was somewhat pained to observe that even the students of Mysore had no religious

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"I have experimented with quite a number of boys in order to understand how best to impart religious instruction, and whilst I found that book instruction was somewhat of an aid, by itself it was useless. Religious instruction, I discovered, was imparted by teachers living the religion themselves. I have found that boys imbibe more from the teachers' own lives than they do from the books that they read to them, or the lectures that they deliver to them with their lips. I have discovered to my great joy that boys and girls have unconsciously a faculty of penetration whereby they read the thoughts of their teachers. Woe to the teacher who teaches one thing with his lips, and carries another in his breast!"

—*With Gandhiji in Ceylon*, p. 103

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instruction in the State schools. I know that there is a school of thought which believes in only secular instruction being given in public schools. I know also that in a country like India, where there are most religions of the world represented, and where there are so many denominations in the same religion, there must be a difficulty about making provision for religious instruction. But if India is not to declare spiritual bankruptcy, religious instruction of its youth must be held to be at least as necessary as secular instruction. It is true that knowledge of religious books is no equivalent of that religion. But if we cannot have religion, we must be satisfied with providing our boys and girls with what is next best. And whether there is such instruction given in the schools or not, grown-up students must cultivate the art of self-help about matters religious as about others. They may start their own class, just as thay have their own debating and now, spinners' clubs.

The *Gita* is, in my opinion, a very easy book to understand. It does present some fundamental problems which are no doubt difficult of solution. But the general trend of the *Gita* is, in my opinion, unmistakable. It is accepted by all Hindu sects as authoritative. It is free from any form of dogma. In a short compass it gives a complete, reasoned, moral code. It satisfies both the intellect and the heart. It is thus both philosophical and devotional. Its appeal is universal. The language is incredibly simple. But I, nevertheless, think that there should be an authoritative version in each vernacular, and the translation should be so prepared as to avoid technicalities, and in a manner that would make the teaching of the *Gita* intelligible to the average man. The suggestion is not intended in anyway to supplement

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the original. For, I reiterate my opinion that every Hindu boy and girl should know Sanskrit.* But, for a long time to come, there will be millions without any knowledge of Sanskrit. It would be suicidal to keep them deprived of the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*, because they do not know Sanskrit.[1]

Soulful Message of the Gita

THE very first earnest request that I would make to the students is, that each one of you should search within, and wherever you find that my remarks are justified, you will begin to reform and rebuild yourself. And those of you who are Hindus will endeavour to understand the very simple, beautiful, and to me soulful message of the *Gita*. The experience, and I think I can say the experience without a single exception of those who have really carried on this search after Truth, to render their hearts pure, is that it is an utterly impossible effort, unless it is accompanied by a heart-prayer to the Almighty. Whatever, therefore, you do, do not lose faith in God. I cannot reason out the thing for you; because, really speaking, it is a fact which transcends reason. But I want you to cultivate a spirit of real humility and not summarily reject the experiences of so many teachers,

*"The study of Sanskrit is being sadly neglected. I belong to a generation which believed in the study of the ancient languages. I do not believe that such a study is a waste of time and effort. I believe it is an aid to the study of modern languages. This is truer of Sanskrit than of any other ancient language so far as India is concerned, and every nationalist should study it because it makes a study of the provincial languages easier than otherwise. It is the language in which our forefathers thought and wrote. No Hindu boy or girl should be without the knowledge of the rudiments of Sanskrit, if he will imbibe the spirit of his religion."

—*Harijan* : March 23, 1940.

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Rishis and others of the world, and not regard them as so many superstitious men. And if you will but do this, all the rest that I want to say will be as clear as crystal to you. This will be to me the test of your sincerity of profession.

If you have real faith in God, you cannot but feel for the humblest of His creation. And whether it is the spinning-wheel and *Khadi*, or untouchability, or total prohibition, or social reform in connection with child-widows or child-wives and many other similar things, you will find that all these activities are derived from the same source.[2]

Hindu Students and the Gita

I DO believe that it is possible for every human being to become perfect. It is necessary for all to aspire after perfection, even as God is perfect. It is necessary for us all to aspire after perfection; but when the blessed state is attained, it becomes indescribable, indefinable. And I, therefore, submit in all humility that even the *Vedas*, the *Quran* and the *Bible* are the imperfect word of God; and imperfect beings that we are, we are swayed to and fro by a multitude of passions. It is impossible for us even to understand this word of God in its fullness. And so I say to a Hindu boy that he must not uproot the traditions in which he has been brought up, as I say to a Mussalman or a Christian boy that he must not uproot his traditions.

And so, whilst I would welcome your learning the *Gospel* and your learning the *Quran*, I would certainly insist on all of you Hindu boys, if I had the power of insistence, learning the *Gita*. It is my belief that the impurity that we see about boys in schools, the carelessness about things that matter in life, the levity with which the student world deals with the

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greatest and most fundamental questions of life, is due to this uprooting of tradition from which boys have hitherto derived their sustenance.

But I must not be misunderstood. I do not hold that everything ancient is good, because it is ancient. I do not advocate surrender of God-given reasoning faculty in the face of ancient tradition. Any tradition, however ancient, if inconsistent with morality, is fit to be banished from the land. Untouchability may be considered to be an ancient tradition, the institution of child-widowhood and child-marriage may be considered to be ancient tradition, and even so many an ancient horrible belief and superstitious practice. I would sweep them out of existence, if I had the power. When, therefore, I talk of respecting the ancient tradition, you now understand what I mean. And it is because I see the same God in the *Bhagavad Gita*, as I see in the *Bible* and the *Quran*, that I say to the Hindu boys that they will derive greater inspiration from the *Bhagavad Gita*, because they will be tuned to the *Gita* more than to any other book.[3]

Equipment for Reading the Gita

I CANNOT conceive anything so fortifying as a reverent study of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and if students will remember that they are to learn it not in order to parade their Sanskrit knowledge, or even their knowledge of the *Gita*, they will know that they learn it in order to derive spiritual comfort and to solve the moral difficulties that face them. No man who engages in a reverent study of that book can help becoming a true servant of the nation and, through it, of humanity.

The *Gita* contains the Gospel of Work, the Gospel of *Bhakti* or Devotion, and the Gospel of *Jnana* or Knowledge.

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Life should be a harmonious whole of these three. But the Gospel of Service is the basis of all, and what can be more necessary for those who want to serve the country than that they begin with the chapter enunciating the Gospel of Work ? But you must approach it with five necessary equipments, *viz.*, *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), *Satya* (Truth), *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy), *Aparigraha* (Non-possession), and *Asteya* (Non-stealing). Then, and then only, will you be able to reach a correct interpretation of it. And then you will read it to discover in it *Ahimsa* and not *Himsa*, as so many now-a-days try to do. Read it with the necessary equipment and, I assure you, you will have peace of which you were never aware before.[4]

Distortion of Truth

A CORRESPONDENT had been endeavouring with the help of the Headmaster of a High School to introduce the teaching of the *Gita* among its boys. But, at a recent meeting convened to organize *Gita* readings, a Bank Manager got up and disturbed the even tenor of the proceedings by saying that students had not the *adhikara* (qualification) for studying the *Gita*; it was not a plaything to be placed before students. The correspondent sends me a long and argued letter about the incident and sends, in support of his contention, some apt sayings from Ramakrishna Paramahamsa from which I cull the following :

> " Boys and youths should be encouraged to seek God. They are like unpecked fruits, being totally untainted by worldly desires. Once such desires have entered their minds, it is very difficult to make them tread the path to salvation.

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"Why do I love young men so much? Because they are masters of the whole (16 annas) of their minds, which get divided and sub-divided as they grow up. One half of the mind of a married man goes to his wife. When a child is born it takes away one-fourth (4 annas), and the remaining one-fourth (4 annas) is scattered over parents, worldy honours, dress etc. Therefore, a young mind can easily know God. It is very difficult for old people to do so.

"The parrot cannot be taught to sing if the membrane of its throat becomes hardened with age. It must be taught while it is young. Similarly, in old age, it is difficult for the mind to be fixed on God. It can be easily done so in youth.

"If a *seer* of adulterated milk contains a *chhatank* (sixteenth part of a *seer*) of water, it can be thickened into *kshira* (condensed milk) with very little labour and consumption of fuel. But should there be three *poas* ($\frac{3}{4}$ *seer*) of water in a *seer*, the milk cannot be easily thickened and a large consumption of fuel will be required. *A young mind being but slightly adulterated with worldly desires can be easily turned towards God; this cannot be done with the minds of old people which are highly adulterated with such desires.*

"The tender bamboo can be easily bent, but the full-grown bamboo breaks when an attempt is made to bend it. It is easy to bend young hearts towards God, but the heart of the old escapes the hold when so drawn.

"The human mind is like a package of mustard seed. As it is very difficult to gather the seeds that escape out

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of a torn package and are scattered in all directions, so when the human mind runs in diverse directions and is occupied with many worldly things, it is not a very easy task to collect and concentrate it. The mind of a youth, not running in diverse directions, can be easily fixed on anything; but the mind of an old man being totally occupied with worldly things, it is very hard for him to draw it away from them and fix it on God."

I had heard of *adhikara* in connection with the *Vedas*, but I never knew that the *Gita* required the qualifications that the Bank Manager had in mind. It would have been better if he had stated the nature of the qualifications he required. The *Gita* clearly states that it is meant for all but scoffers. If Hindu students may not read the *Gita*, they may not read any religious works at all. Indeed, the original conception in Hinduism is that the student life is the life of a *Brahmachari* who should begin it with a knowledge of religion *coupled with practice*, so that he may digest what he learns and weave religious conduct into his life. The student of old began to live his religion before he knew what it was, and this conduct was followed by due enlightenment, so that he might know the reason for the conduct prescribed for him.

Adhikara, then, there certainly was. But it was the *adhikara* of right conduct known as the five *Yamas* or cardinal restraints, *Ahimsa* (Innocence), *Satya* (Truth), *Asteya* (Non-stealing), *Aparigraha* (Non-possession), and *Brahmacharya* (Celibacy). These were the rules that had to be observed by anybody who wished to study religion. He may not go to religious books for proving the necessity of these fundamentals of religion.

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But to-day the word *adhikara*, like many such potent words, has suffered distortion, and a dissolute man, simply because he is called a *Brahmin*, has *adhikara* to read and expound *Shastras* to us, whereas a man, if he is labelled an untouchable because of his birth in a particular state, no matter how virtuous he may be, may not read them.

But the author of the *Mahabharata*, of which the *Gita* is a part, wrote his great work for the purpose of meeting this insane objection and made it accessible to all irrespective of the so-called caste, provided, I presume, that he complied with the observances I have described. I add the qualifying expression 'I presume' for, at the time of writing, I do not recall the observance of the *Yamas* as a condition precedent to a person studying the *Mahabharata*. Experience, however, shows that the purity of heart and the devotional frame of mind are necessary for a proper understanding of religious books.

The printing age has broken down all barriers and scoffers read religious books with the same freedom (if not greater) that the religiously minded have. But we are here discussing the propriety of students reading the *Gita* as part of religious instruction and devotional exercise. Here I cannot imagine any class of persons more amenable to the restraints and thus more fitted than students for such instruction. Unfortunately, it is to be admitted that neither the students nor the instructors in the majority of cases think anything of the real *adhikara* of the five restraints.[5]

Gita in National Schools

A CORRESPONDENT asks whether *Gita* may be compulsorily taught in national schools to all boys, whether Hindus

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or non-Hindus. When I was travelling in Mysore, I had occasion to express my sorrow that the Hindu boys of a High School did not know the *Gita*. I am thus partial to the teaching of *Gita* not only in national schools, but in every educational institution. It should be considered a shame for a Hindu boy or girl not to know the *Gita*. But my insistence stops short at compulsion, especially so for national schools. Whilst it is true that *Gita* is a book of universal religion, it is a claim which cannot be forced upon anyone. A Christian or a Mussalman or a Parsi may reject the claim or may advance the same claim for the *Bible*, the *Quran*, or the *Avesta* as the case may be. I fear that *Gita* teaching cannot be made compulsory even regarding all those who may choose to be classified as Hindus. Many Sikhs and Jains regard themselves as Hindus, but may object to compulsory *Gita* teaching for their boys and girls. The case will be different for sectional schools. I should hold it quite appropriate for a Vaishnav school, for instance, to lay down *Gita* as part of religious instruction. Every private school has the right to prescribe its own course of instruction. But a national school has to act within well-defined limits. There is no compulsion where there is no interference with a right. No one can claim the right to enter private school, every member of a nation has the right presumptively to enter a national school. Hence what would be regarded in the one case as a condition of entrance, would, in the other, be regarded as compulsion. The *Gita* will never be universal by compulsion from without. It will be so if its admirers will not seek to force it down the throats of others, and if they will illustrate its teachings in their own lives.

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Gita—My Mother

EARLY in my childhood, I had felt the need of a scripture that would serve me as an unfailing guide through the trials and temptations of life. The *Vedas* could not supply that need, if only because to learn them would require fifteen to sixteen years of hard study at a place like Kashi, for which I was not ready then. But the *Gita*, I had read somewhere, gave within the compass of its 700 verses the quintessence of all the *Shastras* and the *Upanishads*. That decided me. I learnt Sanskrit to enable me to read *Gita*. To-day, the *Gita* is not only my *Bible* or my *Quran*, it is more than that—it is my Mother. I lost my earthly mother who gave me birth long ago ; but this Eternal Mother has completely filled her place by my side ever since. She has never changed, she has never failed me. When I am in difficulty or distress, I take refuge in her bosom. Often, in the course of my struggle against untouchability, I am confronted with conflicting opinions delivered by doctors of learning. Some of them tell me that untouchability, as it is practised to-day, has no sanction in Hinduism and they bless my efforts to eradicate it ; but there are some others who maintain that untouchability has been an essential part of Hinduism from the very beginning. Which authority should I follow under the circumstances ? I feel absolutely at sea. The *Vedas* and the *Smritis* are of no avail to me. I, then, approach the Mother and say: 'Mother, these learned *Pandits* have put me in a predicament. Help me out of my perplexity.' And the Mother, with a smile, says in reply : " The assurance held out by me in the Ninth Chapter is not meant for the *Brahmins* only, but for the sinner and the outcaste, the down-trodden

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and the disinherited, too." But, in order to be worthy of that promise, we must be obedient and devoted children of the Mother, and not disobedient and disloyal children who only make pretence of devotion.

It is sometimes alleged against the *Gita* that it is too difficult a work for the man in the street. The criticism. I venture to submit is ill founded. The *Gita* enabled the late Lokmanya, out of his encyclopaedic learning and study, to produce a monumental commentary. For him, it was a store-house of profound truths to exercise his intellect upon. But that need not scare away a lay reader. If you find all the 18 chapters too difficult to negotiate, make a careful study of the first three chapters only. They will give you, in a nutshell, what is propounded in greater detail and from different angles in the remaining fifteen chapters. Even these three chapters can be further epitomized in a few verses that can be selected from these chapters. Add to this the fact, that at three distinct places the *Gita* goes even further and further and exhorts us to leave alone all '*isms*' and take refuge in the Lord alone, and it will be seen how baseless is the charge that the message of the *Gita* is too subtle or complicated for lay minds to understand. The *Gita* is the Universal Mother. She turns away nobody. Her door is wide open to anyone who knocks. A true votary of the *Gita* does not know what disappointment is. He ever dwells in perennial joy and peace that passeth understanding. But that peace and joy come not to the sceptic or to him who is proud of his intellect or learning. It is reserved only for the humble in spirit, who brings to her worship a fullness of faith and an undivided singleness of mind. There never was a man who worshipped her in that spirit and went

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Our students are prone to be upset by trifles. A trivial thing like failure in an examination plunges them into the darkest despair. The *Gita* inculcates in them the duty of perseverance in the face of seeming failure. It teaches us that we have a right to actions only, but not to the fruit thereof, and that success and failure are one and the same thing at bottom. It calls upon us to dedicate ourselves body, mind and soul to pure duty, and not to become mental voluptuaries at the mercy of all chance desires and undisciplined impulses. As a *Satyagrahi*, I can declare that the *Gita* is ever presenting me with fresh lessons. If somebody tells me that this is my delusion, my reply to him would be that I shall hug this delusion as my richest treasure.

I would advise the students to begin their day with an early morning recitation of the *Gita*. I am a lover and devotee of Tulsidas. I adore the great spirit that gave to an aching world the all-healing *Mantra* of *Ramanama*. But I am here to-day, not to present Tulsidas to you, but to ask you to take up the study of the *Gita*, not in a carping or critical spirit, but in a devout and reverent spirit. Thus approached, she will grant your every wish. It is no joke, I admit, remembering by heart all the 18 chapters, but it is worthwile to make the attempt. Once you have tasted of its sweet nectar, your attachment to it will grow from day to day. The recitation of the *Gita* verses will support you in your trials and console you in your distress, even in the darkness of solitary confinement. And if, with these verses on your lips, you receive the final summons and deliver up your spirit, you will attain *Brahma Nirvana**—the Final Liberation. What that blessed state is, I leave it for your learned *Acharyas* to explain to you.[7]

* " *Nirvana* is utter extinction of all that is base in us, all that is vicious in us, all that is corrupt and corruptible in us. *Nirvana* is not like the black, dead peace of the grave, but the living peace, the living happiness of a soul which is conscious of itself and conscious of having found its own abode in the heart of the Eternal."

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CHAPTER VIII

STUDENTS AND ENGLISH EDUCATION

THE system of (English) education is an unmitigated evil. I put my best energy to destroy that system. I don't say that we have got as yet any advantage from that system. The advantages we have so far got are in spite of the system, not because of the system. Supposing the English were not here, India would have marched with other parts of the world, and even if it continued to be under Moghul rule, many people would learn English as a language and a literature. The present system enslaves us, without allowing a discriminating use of English literature.

I am opposed to make a fetish of English education. I don't hate English education. I don't want to destroy the English language but read English as an Indian nationalist would do. I ask you to consider and value the glamour of education at its true worth. English education has emasculated us, constrained our intellect, and the manner of imparting this education has rendered us effeminate. We want to bask in the sunshine of freedom, but the enslaving system emasculates our nation.[1]

Evil Effects of English Education

IT is my considered opinion that English education in the manner it has been given has emasculated the English-educated Indian, it has put a severe strain upon the Indian students' nervous energy, and has made of us imitators. The process of displacing the vernacular has been one of the saddest chapters in the British connection. Ram Mohan Roy would have been a Gujarati reformer and Lokmanya Tilak

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would have been a greater scholar, if they had not to start with the handicap of having to think in English and transmit their thoughts chiefly in English. Their effect on their own people, marvellous as it was, would have been greater if they had been brought up under a less unnatural system. No doubt they both gained from their knowledge of the rich treasures of English literature. But these should have been accessible to them through their own vernaculars. No country can become a nation by producing a race of translators. Think of what would have happened to the English if they had not an authorised version of the *Bible*. I do believe that Chaitanya, Kabir, Nanak, Guru Govind Singh, Shivaji and Pratap were greater than Ram Mohan Roy and Tilak. I know that comparisons are odious. All are great in their own way.

But judged by the results, the effect of Ram Mohan and Tilak on the masses is not so permanent or far-reaching as that of the others more fortunately born. Judged by the obstacles they had to surmount, they were giants; and both would have been greater in achieving results if they had not been handicapped by the system under which they received their training. I refuse to believe that the Raja and the Lokmanya could not have thought the thoughts they did without a knowledge of the English language. Of all the superstitions that affect India, none is so great as that a knowledge of the English language is necessary for imbibing ideas of liberty and developing accuracy of thought. It should be remembered that there has been only one system of education before the country for the past fifty years, and only one medium of expression forced on the country.

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have, therefore, no data before us as to what we would have been but for the education in the existing schools and colleges. This, however, we do know that India to-day is poorer than fifty years ago, less able to defend herself, and her children have less stamina. I need not be told that that is due to the defect in the system of government. The system of education is its most defective part. It was conceived and born in error, for the English rulers honestly believed that indigenous system to be worse than useless. It has been nurtured in sin, for the tendency has been to dwarf the Indian body, mind and soul.[2]

Method of Education in Europe and India

IN Europe, the education follows the peculiar genius of the people. One thing is taught in three different countries in three different ways according to the varying culture and genius of each. Only we delight in slavishly following the English model. The whole objective of the present system was to make us faithful imitators of the West. There is nothing novel in this; it is but the natural outcome of our having entrusted our affairs to those who never cared to know us. Poor Macaulay! What could he do? He sincerely believed that our Sanskrit literature was all superstition, and he seriously thought he would give us something wholesome in the shape of Western culture. Let us not abuse him for having unintentionally worked our ruin. As a result of English being the medium of instruction, we have lost originality. We have become birds without wings. The most we aspire to is a clerkship or editorship.[3]

The Place of English

THERE are many who believe that we cannot acquire the spirit of freedom without the music of the English words

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singing in our ears and sounding through our lips. This is an infatuation. If it were the truth, *Swaraj* would be as distant as the Greek Kalends.

English is the language of international commerce; it is the language of diplomacy ; and it contains many a rich literary treasure ; it gives us an introduction to Western thought and culture. For a few of us, therefore, a knowledge of English is necessary. They can carry on the departments of national commerce and international diplomacy, and for giving to the nation the best of Western literature, thought and science. That would be the legitimate use of English. Whereas to-day English has usurped the dearest place in our hearts and dethroned our mother-tongues. It is an unnatural place due to our unequal relations with Englishmen. The highest development of the Indian mind must be possible without a knowledge of English. It is doing violence to the manhood, and specially the womanhood of India, to encourage our boys and girls to think that an entry into the best society is impossible without a knowledge of English. It is too humiliating a thought to be bearable. To get rid of the infatuation for English is one of the essentials of *Swaraj*.[1]

English Learning

ENGLISH is to-day studied because of its commercial and so-called political value. Our boys think, and rightly in the present circumstances, that without English they cannot get Government service. Girls are taught English as a passport to marriage. I know several instances of women wanting to learn English so that they may be able to talk to Englishmen in English. I know husbands who are sorry that their wives cannot talk to them and their friends in English. I know

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families in which English is being *made* the mother-tongue. Hundreds of youths believe that without a knowledge of English, freedom for India is practically impossible. The canker has so eaten into the society that, in many cases, the only meaning of education is a knowledge of English. All these are for me signs of our slavery and degradation. It is unbearable to me that the vernaculars should be crushed and starved as they have been. I cannot tolerate the idea of parents writing to their children, or husbands writing to their wives, not in their own vernaculars but in English.

I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed, I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any. I refuse to live in other peoples houses as an interloper, a beggar or a slave. I refuse to put the unnecessary strain of learning English upon my sisters for the sake of false pride or questionable social advantage. I would have our young men and young women with literary tastes to learn as much of English and other world languages as they like, and then expect them to give the benefit of their learning to the world, like a Bose, a Ray or a Tagore. But I would not have a single Indian to forget, neglect, or be ashamed of his mother-tongue, or to feel that he or she cannot think or express the best thoughts in his or her own vernacular. Mine is not a religion of the prison-house. It has room for the least among God's creation. But it is proof against insolence, pride of race, religion or colour.[5]

Western Culture

WHILE I have freely acknowledged my debt to Western culture, I can say that whatever service I have been able to

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render to the nation has been due *entirely* to the retention by me of Eastern culture to the extent it has been possible. I should have been thoroughly useless to the masses as an anglicized, denationalized being, knowing little of, caring less for, and perhaps even despising their ways, habits, thoughts and aspirations. It is difficult to estimate the loss of energy caused to the nation by her children being obliged to resist the encroachments of a culture which, however good in itself, was unsuited for them whilst they had not imbibed and become rooted in their own.

Examine the question synthetically. Would Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, Tulsidas and a host of other reformers have done better if they had been attached from their childhood to the most efficiently managed English schools ? Would Dayanand have done better if he had become an M.A. of an Indian University ? Where is among the easy-going, ease-loving, English-speaking *Rajas* and *Maharajas*, brought up from their infancy under the influence of Western culture, one who could be named in the same breath as Shivaji who braved all perils and shared the simple life of his hardy men ? Are they good specimens of Western culture, these Neroes who are fiddling in London and Paris whilst their Romes are burning ? There is nothing to be proud of in their culture which has made them foreigners in their own land, and which has taught them to prefer to waste the substance of their *ryots* and their own souls in Europe to sharing the happiness and miseries of those over whom they are called by a Higher Power to rule.

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Curse of Foreign Medium

BUT for the fact that the only higher education, the only education worth the name, has been received by us through the English medium, there would be no need to prove such a self-evident proposition that the youth of a nation to remain a nation must receive all instruction, including the highest, in its own vernacular or vernaculars. Surely, it is a self-demonstrated proposition that the youth of a nation cannot keep or establish a living contact with the masses unless their knowldge is received and assimilated through a medium understood by the people. Who can calculate the immeasurable loss sustained by the nation owing to thousands of its young men having been obliged to waste years in mastering a foreign language and its idiom, of which in their daily life they have the least use and in learning which they had to neglect their own mother-tongue and their own literature ? There never was a greater superstition than that a particular language can be incapable of expansion or of expressing abstruse or scientific ideas. A language is an exact reflection of the character and growth of its speakers.

Among the many evils of foreign rule, this blighting imposition of a foreign medium upon the youth of the country will be counted by history as one of the greatest. It has sapped the energy of the nation, it has shortened the lives of the pupils. It has estranged them from the masses, it has made education unnecessarily expensive. If this process is still persisted in, it bids fair to rob the nation of its soul. The sooner, therefore, educated India shakes itself free from the hypnotic spell of the foreign medium, the better it would be for them and the people.

I am certain that the children of the nation that receive instruction in a tongue other than their own commit suicide.

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It robs them of their birth-right. A foreign medium means an undue strain upon the youngsters, it robs them of all originality. It stunts their growth and isolates them from their home. I regard, therefore, such a thing as a national tragedy of first importance.[8]

The foreign medium has caused brain-fag, put an undue strain upon the nerves of our children, made them crammers and imitators, unfitted them for original work and thought, and disabled them from filtrating their learning to the family or the masses. The foreign medium has made our children practically foreigners in their own land. It is the greatest tragedy of the existing system. The foreign medium has prevented the growth of our vernaculars. If I had the powers of a despot, I would to-day stop the tuition of our boys and girls through a foreign medium, and require all the teachers and professors on pain of dismissal to introduce the change forthwith. I would not wait for the preparation of text-books. They will follow the change. It is an evil that needs a summary remedy.[9]

In no other country do we find the state of things we do here. We have paid dearly for having all these years learnt everything through the medium of the English language. We have strayed from the path of duty.[10]

My uncompromising opposition to the foreign medium has resulted in an unwarranted charge being levelled against me of being hostile to foreign culture or the learning of the English language. No reader of *Young India* could have missed the statement often made by me, that I regard English as the language of international commerce and diplomacy, and, therefore, consider its knowledge on the part of some of us

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as essential. As it contains some of the richest treasures of thought and literature, I would certainly encourage its careful study among those who have linguistic talents and expect them to translate those treasures for the nation in its vernaculars.

Nothing can be farther from my thought than that we should become exclusive or erect barriers. But I do respectfully contend that an appreciation of other cultures can fitly follow, never precede, an appreciation and assimilation of our own. It is my firm opinion that no culture has treasures so rich as ours has. We have not known it, we have been made even to depreciate its study and depreciate its value. We have almost ceased to live it. An academic grasp without practice behind it is like an embalmed corpse, perhaps lovely to look at but nothing to inspire or ennoble. My religion forbids me to belittle or disregard other cultures, as it insists under pain of civil suicide upon imbibing and living my own.[11]

A National Tragedy

THE greatest service we can render society is to free ourselves and it from the superstitious regard we have learnt to pay to the learning of the English language. It is the medium of instruction in our schools and colleges. It is becoming the *lingua franca* of the country. Our best thoughts are expressed in it. This belief in the necessity of English training has enslaved us. It has unfitted us for true national service. Were it not for force of habit, we could not fail to see that by reason of English being the medium of instruction, our intellect has been segregated, we have been isolated from the masses, the best minds of the nation have become caged, and the masses have not received the benefit of the

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new ideas we have received. We have been engaged these past sixty years in memorising strange words and their pronunciation instead of assimilating facts. In the place of building upon the foundation, training received from our parents, we have almost unlearnt it. There is no parallel to this in history. It is a national tragedy.

The first and the greatest social service we can render is to revert to our vernacular, to restore Hindi to its natural place as the national language, and begin carrying on all our provincial proceedings in our respective vernaculars and national proceedings in Hindi. We ought not to rest till our schools and colleges give us instruction through the vernaculars. It ought not to be necessary even for the sake of our English friends to have to speak in English. Every English civil and military officer has to know Hindi. Most English merchants learn it because they need it for their business. The day must soon come when our legislatures will debate national affairs in the vernaculars or Hindi as the case may be. Hitherto, the masses have been strangers to their proceedings. The vernacular papers have tried to undo the mischief a little. But the task is beyond them. In this ancient land of cultured thinkers, the presence in our midst of a Tagore or a Bose or a Ray ought not to excite wonder. Yet the painful fact is that there are so few of them. It is my conviction that all national activity suffers materially owing to this radical defect in our system of education.[13]

Why this Handicap ?

OUR language is the reflection of ourselves, and if you tell me that our languages are too poor to express the best thought, then I say that the sooner we are wiped out of

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existence the better for us. Is there a man who dreams that English can ever become the national language of India ? Why this handicap on the nation ? Just consider for one moment what an unequal race our lads have to run with every English lad. I had the privilege of a close conversation with some Poona professors. They assured me that every Indian youth, because he reached his knowledge through the English language, lost at least six precious years of life. Multiply that by the number of students turned out by our schools and colleges and find out for yourselves how many thousand years have been lost to the nation. The charge against us is that we have no initiative. How can we have any, if we are to devote the precious years of our life to the mastery of the foreign tongue ? We fail in this attempt also.

I have heard it said that after all it is English-educated India which is leading and which is doing all the things for the nation. It would be monstrous if it were otherwise. The only education we receive is English education. Surely, we must show something for it. But suppose that we had been receiving, during the past fifty years, education through our vernaculars, what should we have to-day? We should have to-day a free India; we should have our educated men not as if they were foreigners in their own land, but speaking to the heart of the nation ; they would be working among the poorest of the poor, and whatever they would have gained during the past fifty years would be a heritage for the nation. To-day, even our wives are not the sharers in our best thought. Look at Prof. Bose and Prof. Ray and their brilliant researches. Is it not a shame that their researches are not the common property of the masses[13]

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Japan's Example

WE devote precious years of our lives to learning the English language, our ambition being to be able to speak English as Englishmen, and our breast swells with pride when an Englishman pats us on our back for speaking flawless English. Think of the time and energy of our youth expended on learning the English language, as if it was our mother-tongue, and calculate by simple multiplication the number of years and the volume of precious energy that are lost to the nation.

You know what has happened in Japan—a country which I do not regard as essentially great—but which is regarded as great in Asia, in that it has successfully challenged the supremacy of the Western nations. The thousands of boys and girls in the Japanese schools and colleges receive their education not through the medium of English, but through Japanese. Their script is difficult, but it is no bar to their learning it and they have not given it up in preference to the Roman. Not that they boycott English and other European languages. But they economize their energy. Those who need to learn them, do so for enriching the Japanese thought and knowledge which the West alone can give. They take care to turn into Japanese all that is worth taking from the West. That is because the mind of Japan's youth is fresh and alert. The knowledge gained thus has become national property. Our ambition does not go beyond becoming clerks in Government offices, lawyers, barristers, judges, all helplessly serving the system they would fain destroy. And we have not succeeded either in mastering the English language. I get numerous letters from English-educated people—some

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of them possessing the highest degrees of our universities—but they betray a woeful ignorance of the English language. The reason is simple. Malaviyajis and Radhakrishnans are rare, and the thousands cannot achieve what they have done.[14]

Damage Done to the Nation

LET it be known that I am a lover of the English language and the English. But my love is wise and intelligent. Therefore, I give both the place they deserve. Thus I do not allow the English language to displace the mother-tongue or the natural all-India language—Hindustani. Nor do I let my love of the English displace my fellow-countrymen whose interest I can in no way allow to be injured. I recognize the great importance of the English language for international intercourse. I hold its knowledge as second language to be indispensable for specified Indians, who have to represent the country's interest in the international domain. I regard the English language as an open window for peeping into Western thought and sciences. For this, too, I should set apart a class. Through them, I would spread through the Indian languages the knowledge they have gained from the West. But I would not burden India's children and sap their youthful energy by expecting the expansion of their brains through the medium of a foreign language. I do hold it to be a sin on the part of those who are responsible for producing the unnatural condition under which we are being educated. Such a thing is unknown in any other part of the world. Being too near the scene of the wreck, we are unaware of the damage the nation has suffered by it. I can see the enormity of the damage because of my daily and close contact with the dumb and suppressed millions.[15]

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The medium of a foreign language through which higher education has been imparted in India has caused incalculable intellectual and moral injury to the nation. We are too near our own times to judge the enormity of the damage done. And we, who have received such education, have both to be victims and judges—an almost impossible feat.[16]

De-Indianizing Education

I MUST not be understood to decry English or its noble literature. But the nobility of its literature cannot avail the Indian nation any more than the temperate climate or the scenery and her own literature, even though all the three may be inferior to the English climate, scenery and literature. We and our children must build on our own heritage. If we borrow another, we impoverish our own. We can never grow on foreign victuals. I want the nation to have the treasures contained in that language, and for that matter the other languages of the world, through its own vernaculars. I do not need to learn Bengali in order to know the beauties of Rabindranath's matchless productions. I get them through good translations. Gujarati boys and girls do not need to learn Russian to appreciate Tolstoy's short stories. They learn them through good translations. It is the boast of Englishmen that the best of the world's literary output is in the hands of that nation in simple English inside of a week of its publication. Why need I learn English to get at the best of what Shakespeare and Milton thought and wrote ?

It would be good economy to set apart a class of students whose business would be to learn the best of what is to be learnt in the different languages of the world and give the translation in the vernaculars. Our masters chose the wrong way for us, and habit has made the wrong appear as right.

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I find daily proof of the increasing and continuing wrong being done to the millions by our false, de-Indianizing education. Those graduates who are my valued associates themselves flounder when they have to give expression to their innermost thoughts. They are strangers in their own homes. Their vocabulary in the mother-tongue is so limited that they cannot always finish their speech without having recourse to English words and even sentences. Nor can they exist without English books. They often write to one another in English. I cite the case of my companions to show how deep the evil has gone. For, we have made a conscious effort to mend ourselves.

It has been argued that the wastage that occurs in our colleges need not worry us if, out of the collegians, one Jagdish Bose can be produced by them. I should freely subscribe to the argument, if the wastage was unavoidable. I hope I have shown that it was, and is even now, avoidable. Moreover, the creation of a Bose does not help the argument. For, Bose was not a product of the present education. He rose in spite of the terrible handicaps under which he had to labour. And his knowledge became almost intransmissible to the masses. We seem to have come to think that no one can hope to be like a Bose unless he knows English. I cannot conceive a grosser superstition than this. No Japanese feels so helpless as we seem to do.[17]

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CHAPTER IX

STUDENTS AND NATIONAL LANGUAGE

I MUST cling to my mother-tongue as to my mother's breast, in spite of its shortcomings. It alone can give me the life-giving milk. I love the English tongue in its own place, but I am its inveterate opponent, if it usurps a place which does not belong to it. English is to-day admittedly the world language. I would, therefore, accord it a place as a second, optional language, not in the school but in the university course. That can only be for the select few—not for the millions. To-day, when we have not the means to introduce even free compulsory primary education, how can we make provision for teaching English? Russia has achieved all her scientific progress without English. It is our mental slavery that makes us feel that we cannot do without English. I can never subscribe to that defeatist creed.[1]

I am a lover of the English language. But I do believe that the students of India, who are expected to throw in their lot with the teeming millions and to serve them, will be better qualified if they pay more attention to Hindi than to English. I do not say that you should not learn English; learn it by all means. But, so far as I can see, it cannot be the language of the millions of Indian homes. It will be confined to thousands or tens of thousand, but it will not reach the millions.[2]

Our love of the English language in preference to our own mother-tongue has caused a deep chasm between the educated and the politically-minded classes and the masses. The languages of India have suffered impoverishment.

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flounder when we make the vain attempt to express abstruse thought in the mother-tongue. There are no equivalents for scientific terms. The result has been disastrous. The masses remain cut off from the modern mind. We are too near our own times correctly to measure the disservice caused to India by this neglect of its great languages. It is easy enough to understand that, unless we undo the mischief, the mass mind must remain imprisoned. The masses can make no solid contribution to the construction of *Swaraj*. It is inherent in *Swaraj* based on non-violence that every individual makes his own direct contribution to the Independence movement. The masses cannot do this fully unless they understand every step with all is implications. This is impossible unless every step is explained in their own languages.[3]

The Need for Hindustani

YOU and I, and every one of us has neglected the true education that we should have received in our national schools. It is impossible for the young men of Bengal, for the young men of Gujarat, for the young men of the Deccan to go to the Central Provinces, to go to the United Provinces, to go to the Punjab and all those vast tracts of India which speak nothing but Hindustani; and, therefore, I ask you to learn Hindustani. Do not consider for one moment that you can possibly make English a common medium of expression between the masses. Twenty-two crores of Indians know Hindustani—they do not know any other language. And if you want to steal into the hearts of twenty-two crores of Indians, Hindustani is the only language open to you. I do not wish to underrate the literary value of the English language. I do not wish to underrate the vast treasures that are locked in

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the English books. I do not want to suggest to you that we have overrated the importance of the English language, but I do venture to suggest to you that the English language finds very little place in the economy of *Swaraj*.[4]

Hidden Treasures of Hindustani

I ASSURE you when you approach your study of Hindustani, some of you will find it simple and easy. To some of you the words will seem perfectly natural, because the vocabulary is common to Bengali, Hindi and most of the Indian languages, barring the Dravidian stock. You will find also it will need your intellect, and it will satisfy all the intellectual requirements of intellectual Bengal. And if you want to go in for literature, I promise you will find treasures hidden both in Hindi and Urdu whatever scripts you take up—and whatever books you take up first. You talk of the poverty of Hindi literature, you talk of the poverty of to-day's Hindi, but if you dive deep into the pages of *Ramayana* of Tulsidas, probably you will share my opinion that there is no other book that stands equal to it in the literature of the world in modern languages. That one book has given me faith and hope which no other book has given. I think that it is a book which can stand any criticism and any scrutiny alike in literary grace, in metaphor and in religious fervour.[5]

The Question of Hindi

I SHALL take this occasion to give you a few obvious reasons why Hindi or Hindustani alone can be the national language. So long as you live in Karnatak and do not look out of it, a knowledge of Kannada is enough for you. But a look at any one of your villages is enough to show that your outlook and your interests have widened, you no longer think in the

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terms of Karnatak, but in the terms of India. Events outside Karnatak interest you, but the interest cannot obviously go very far without a common medium of expression. How is a Karnatak man to establish and maintain contact with men from Sind or U. P. ? Some of our people have held and, perhaps, still hold that English can be this medium. If it was a question of a few thousands of our educated people, English would certainly do. But I am sure none of you will be satisfied with that. You and I want millions of people to establish inter-provincial contacts, and they cannot obviously do so through English for generations to come, if ever. There is no reason why they should all learn English, and it certainly is no sure or substantial means of winning a liveli hood. Its value for this object will, if any thing, become less and less as more come to learn it. Then Hindi-Hindustani offers no difficulty in studying as English must. Study of it is never going to take the time that study of English would do.

The reason why Hindi is so ridiculously easy is that all the languages, including even the four South Indian, spoken by Hindus in India, contain a large number of Sanskrit words. It is a matter of history that contact in the old days in the South and the North used to be maintained by means of Sanskrit. Even to-day the *Shastris* in the South hold discourses with the *Shastris* in the North through Sanskrit. The difference in the various vernaculars is mainly of grammar. In the North Indian languages, even the grammatical structure is identical. The grammar of the South Indian languages is, of course, vastly different, and even their vocabularies, before they came under the influence of Sanskrit, were equally different. But now even these languages have adopted very large number of Sanskrit words, so much

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so that I have not found it difficult, wherever I have gone South, to get a gist of what was being said in all the four languages.

There is no difference whatsoever between Hindi and Urdu or Hindustani. The grammar is common to both, it is only the script that makes the difference, and when one comes to think of it, one finds that the three words Hindi, Hindustani and Urdu denote only one language. If we were to refer to the lexicons of these languages, we should find that most of the words are the same. For, then, therefore, barring the question of script, which will adjust itself, there is no difficulty whatsoever.

To return, therefore, to where I began. If your horizon goes as far as Srinagar in the North and Cape Comorin in the South, Karachi in the West and Dibrugarh in the East—as, indeed, it should—there is for you nothing for it but to learn Hindi. English, I have shown to you, cannot be our *lingua franca*. I have no prejudice against English. A knowledge of English is necessary for a few scholars, it is necessary for international contact and for a knowledge of the sciences pursued in the West. But I am pained when an attempt is made to give English a place it cannot take. That attempt, I have no doubt, is bound to fail. Everything looks proper in its own place.

There is a scare of which I should like to disabuse your minds. Is Hindi to be taught at the expense of Kannada? Is it likely to oust Kannada ? On the contrary, I claim that the more we propagate Hindi, the more shall we stimulate a study of vernaculars and thereby improve their power and

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potency. I say this from my experience of different provinces.*

A word about the question of script. Even when I was in South Africa, I thought that all the languages derived from Sanskrit should have Devnagari script, and I am sure that even the Dravidian languages could be easily learnt through the Devnagari script. I have tried to learn Tamil and Telugu scripts, as also Kannada and Malayalam, for a few days, through their respective scripts. I tell you I was frightfully upset over having to learn four scripts when I could see that if the four languages had a common script—Devnagari —I should learn, then, in no time. What a terrible strain it is on those like me who are anxious to learn the four languages. As between the speakers of the four South vernaculars, does it need any argument to show that Devnagari would be the most convenient script for the speaker of one to learn the other three ? The question of Hindi as *lingua franca* need not be mixed up with the question of the script, but I have referred to this simply in order to point out the difficulty of those who want to know all the Indian languages.[6]

*"A fear has been expressed that the propagation of the national tongue would prove inimical to the provincial languages. That fear is rooted in ignorance. Provincial tongues provide the sure foundation on which the edifice of the national tongue should rest. The two are intended to complement, not supplant each other."
—*Harijan*, Aug. 18, 1946.

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CHAPTER X

STUDENTS AND TRUE EDUCATION

TRUE *Vidya* (knowledge) is the art of self-purification.[1] Real education consists in drawing the best out of yourself. What better book can there be than the Book of Humanity.[2]

The education imparted should be true education, that is to say, which draws out the best in the character of the taught. Every one of us has good inherent in the soul, it needs to be drawn out by the teachers, and only those teachers can perform this sacred function whose own character is unsullied, who are always ready to learn and to grow from perfection to perfection.[3]

Real education has to draw out the best from the boys and girls to be educated. This can never be done by packing ill-assorted and unwanted information into the heads of the pupils. It becomes a dead weight, crushing all originality in them and turning them into mere automata. If we were not ourselves victims of the system, we would long ago have realized the mischief wrought by the modern method of giving mass education, especially in the case like India's.[4]

It is a gross superstition to suppose that knowledge can be obtained only by going to schools and colleges. The world produced brilliant students before schools and colleges came into being. There is nothing so ennobling or lasting as self-study. Schools and colleges make most of us mere receptacles for holding the superfluities of knowledge. Wheat is left out and mere husk is taken in. I do not wish to decry schools and colleges as such. They have their use. But

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we are making altogether too much of them. They are but one of the many means of gaining knowledge.[5]

Knowledge is not confined within the four walls of a school or a college. It is open for every industrious boy or girl to gather real knowledge outside schools and colleges.[6]

After all, a school or a college is a sanctury where there should be nothing that is base or unholy. Schools and colleges are factories for the making of character. Parents send their boys and girls to them so that they may become good men and women.[7]

The school of my conception is one where classes are held in the open under the shade of trees. Some shelter may be necessary, perhaps for protection against the sun and rain. True education can only be given under conditions of utmost simplicity.[8]

Cultural Aspect of Education

I ATTACH far more importance to the cultural aspect of education than to the literary. Culture is the foundation, the primary thing. It should show in the smallest detail of your conduct and personal behaviour, how you sit, how you walk, how you dress, etc. Inner culture must be reflected in your speech, the way in which you treat visitors and guests, and behave towards one another and your teachers and elders.

You must make it a rule to prefer walking to using a conveyance. Motor car is not for the millions. You will, therefore, shun it. Millions cannot afford even train journey. Their world is their village. It is a very small thing, but if you faithfully adhere to this rule, it will transform your entire life and fill it with sweetness that natural simplicity carries with it.

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My Goal in Education

Q. What is your goal in education ?

A. Character-building. I would try to develop courage, strength, virtue, the ability to forget oneself in working towards great aims. This is more important than literacy; academic learning is only a means to this greater end.[10]

The pupils have, perhaps, the largest share of responsibility on their shoulders. The future depends upon their ability, integrity, application, and patriotism. The teachers cannot give what the pupils have not. The teachers can help to 'draw out' in the pupils what they have. If it were otherwise, if the teachers were capable of putting something into their pupils, all the latter receiving instruction under them will be alike, whereas we know, as a matter of fact, that no two pupils have been yet known to be alike. The pupils must, therefore, have initiative. They must cease to be mere imitators. They must learn to think and act for themselves and yet be thoroughly obedient and disciplined. The highest form of freedom carries with it the greatest measure of discipline and humility. Freedom that comes from discipline and humility cannot be denied ; unbridled license is a sign of vulgarity, injurious alike to self and one's neighbours.[11]

Training of the Spirit

THE spiritual training of the boys is a much more difficult matter than their physical and mental training. The training of the spirit is a thing by itself. To develop the spirit is to build character and to gain a knowledge of God and to have self-realization. And I hold that this is an essential part of the training of the young, and that all other training without culture of the spirit is of no use, and might be even harmful.

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I am familiar with the superstition that self-realization is possible only in the fourth stage of life, *i.e.*, *Sannyasa* (renunciation). But it is a matter of common knowledge that those, who defer preparation for this invaluable experience until the last stage of their life, attain not self-realization but old age amounting to a second pitiable childhood, living as a burden on this earth.

How, then, is this spiritual training to be given ? It is not through books that one can impart training of the spirit. Just as physical training is to be imparted through physical exercise, and the intellectual through intellectual exercise, even so the training of the spirit is possible only through the exercise of the spirit. And the exercise of the spirit entirely depends on the life and character of the teacher. The teacher has always to be mindful of his *p*'*s* and *q*'*s* whether he is in the midst of his boys or not. It is possible for a teacher situated miles away to affect the spirit of his pupils by his way of living. It would be idle for me, if I were a liar, to teach my boys to tell the truth. A coward of a teacher would never succeed in making his boys valiant, and a stranger to self-restraint could never teach his pupils the value of self-restraint.[12]

I have always felt that the true text-book for the pupil is his teacher. I remember very little that my teachers taught me from books, but I have even now a clear recollection of the things they taught me independently of books. Children take in much more and with less labour through their ears than through their eyes.[13]

Be Voluntary Scavengers

YOUR education, if it is a vital thing, must shed its fragrance in your surroundings. You must devote a certain portion

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of your time daily to serving the people around in a practical manner. You must, therefore, be prepared to take the spade, the broom-stick and the basket. You must become voluntary scavengers. That would be the richest part of your education, not learning by heart literary theses.[14]

I have no doubt that in every Boarding House for students, all labour, including scavenging, should be performed by the boarders. Such a plan does not interfere with the boarders' studies. Indeed, it adds reality to them and promotes the health of the students, and saves money into the bargain. Those managers, therefore, who, for the sake of gaining cheap popularity, or, being too lazy to discuss such matters to perform all the necessary labour for their homes, will be doing a distinct disservice to their wards. Such labour should be regarded as part of the students' education. But there is one condition attached to the demand upon such students to do the daily labour. The managers should set the example by taking part in it themselves. Then, there will be no danger of 'the low mentality worsening.'[15]

Educative Value of Manual Work

I AM a firm believer in the educative value of manual work. No one in Government schools or colleges bothers to teach the students, how to clean the roads or latrines. Cleanliness and sanitation should form the very *alpha* and *omega* of your training. Scavenging is a fine art you should take pains to learn. Persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness are the first requisite for acquiring learning of any kind. Inquisitiveness should be tempered by humility and respectful regard for the teacher. It must not degenerate into impudence. The latter is the enemy of the receptivity

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of mind. There can be no knowledge without humility and the will to learn.

Useful manual labour, intelligently performed, is the means *par excellence* for developing the intellect. One may develop a sharp intellect otherwise, too. But then it will not be a balanced growth but an unbalanced, distorted abortion. It might easily make of one a rogue and a rascal. A balanced intellect presupposes a harmonious growth of body, mind and soul. An intellect that is developed through the medium of socially useful labour, will be an instrument for service and will not easily be led astray or fall into devious paths. The latter can well be a scourge.[16]

Book Knowledge

OUR education has got to be revolutionized. The brain must be educated through the hand. If I were a poet, I could write poetry on the possibilities of the five fingers. Why should you think that the mind is everything and the hands and feet nothing? Those who do not train their hands, who go through the ordinary rut of education, lack 'music' in their life. All their faculties are not trained. Mere book knowledge does not interest child so as to hold his attention fully. The brain gets weary of mere words, and the child' mind begins to wander. The hand does the things it ought not to do, the eye sees the things it ought not to see, the ear hears the things it ought not to hear, and they do not do, see, or hear, respectively, what they ought to. They are not taught to make the right choice, and so their education often proves their ruin. An education which does not teach us to discriminate between good and bad, to assimilate the one and eschew the other, is a misnomer.[17]

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It is a gross superstition to imagine that knowledge is acquired only through books. We must discard this error. Reading books has a place in life, but is useful only in its own place. If book-knowledge is cultivated at the cost of body labour, we must raise a revolt against it. Most of our time must be devoted to body labour, and only a little to reading. As in India to-day the rich and the so-called higher classes despise body labour, it is very necessary to insist on the dignity of labour. Even for real intellectual development, one should engage in some useful bodily activity.[18]

Literary Training

LITERARY training by itself adds not an inch to one's moral height, and character-building is independent of literary training.

Literary training does not always mean expansion of the intellect. Primarily, it is a matter of memorizing. A letter is imprinted on the brain in the same way as any other picture. But literary training is more than reading. The same thing is true of handicrafts. A knowledge of handicrafts is not limited to the mere crafts. It includes a knowledge of its science. Then, the expansion of the intellect is much greater and quicker than in the high schools and colleges. Therefore, to run down craft work or give it a secondary place in the school programme is greatly to be deplored. Students thus underrate the value and place of craft knowledge in the expansion of the intellect. Book learning damages the eyes and cramps thought and originality. There is no such danger in learning crafts and their science. This, too, involves some study of books. But that study is related to crafts and, therefore, requires the assignment of the intellect

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This is what I mean by basic training. It must, in time, come into its own, for it is so true. But, meanwhile, let there be no differentiation made between book learning and craft work. The latter must be looked upon as an integral part of education and must have the same status as any other subject.[19]

Higher Education

WHEN it is difficult for millions even to make the two ends meet, when millions are dying of starvation, it is monstrous to think of giving our relati es a costly education. Expansion of the mind will come from hard experience, not necessarily in the college or the school room. When some of us deny ourselves and ours the so-called higher education, we shall find the true means of giving and receiving a really high education. Is there not, may there not be, a way of each boy paying for his own education ? There may be no such way. But there is no doubt that when we deny ourselves the way of expensive education, seeing that aspiration after higher education is a laudable end, we shall find out a way of fulfilling it more in accord with our surroundings. The golden rule to apply, in all such cases, is resolutely to refuse to have what millions cannot. The ability to refuse will not descend upon us all of a sudden. The first thing is to cultivate the mental attitude that will not have possessions or facilities denied to millions, and the next immediate thing is to re-arrange our lives as fast as possible in accordance with that mentality.

Without a large, very large, army of such self-sacrificing and determined workers, real progress of the masses I hold to

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Basic Education

THE hunt after position and status has ruined many a family, and has made many depart from the path of rectitude. Who does not know what questionable things fathers of families in need of money for their children's education have considered it their duty to do ? I am convinced that we are in for far worse times, unless we change the whole system of our education. We have only touched the fringe of an ocean of children. The vast mass of them remain without education, not for want of will but of ability and knowledge on the part of the parents. There is something radically wrong, specially for a nation so poor as ours, when parents have to support so many grown-up children, and give them a highly expensive education without the children making any immediate return. I can see nothing wrong in the children, from the very threshold of their education, paying for it in work. The simplest handicraft suitable for all, required for the whole of India, is undoubtedly spinning along with the previous processes. If we introduced this in our educational institutions, we should fulfil three purposes: make education self-supporting, train the bodies of the children as well as their minds, and pave the way for a complete boycott of foreign yarn and cloth. Moreover, the children thus equipped will become self-reliant and independent.... Under my scheme, no child is entitled to education who does not spin a minimum quantity of yarn. Such families will acquire a prestige for self-respect and independence not hitherto dreamt of. This scheme does not exclude a liberal education, but on the contrary, brings it within the easy reach of every boy or girl, and restores literary training to its original dignity by making it primarily a means of mental and moral culture, and only secondarily and indirectly a means of livelihood.[21]

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Self-Supporting Education

THE suggestion has often been made that in order to make education compulsory, or even available to every boy or girl wishing to receive education, our schools and colleges should become almost, if not wholly, self-supporting, not through donations or State aid or fees exacted from students, but through remunerative work done by the students themselves. This can only be done by making industrial training compulsory.

Apart from the necessity, which is daily being more and more recognized, of students having an industrial training side by side with literary training, there is in this country the additional necessity of pursuing industrial training in order to make education directly self-supporting. This can only be done when our students begin to recognize the dignity of labour, and when the convention is established of regarding ignorance of manual occupation a mark of disgrace. In America, which is the richest country in the world, and where, therefore, perhaps there is the least need for making education self-supporting, it is the most usual thing for students to pay their way wholly or partially.

If America has to model her schools and colleges so as to enable students to earn their scholastic expenses, how much more necessary it must be for our schools and colleges ? Is it not far better that we find work for poor students than that we pauperize them by providing free studentships ? It is impossible to exaggerate the harm we do to Indian youth by filling their minds with the false notion that it is ungentlemenly to labour with one's hands and feet for one's livelihood or schooling. The harm done is both moral and

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material, indeed much more moral than material. A free scholarship lies and should lie like load upon a conscientious lad's mind throughout his whole life. No one likes to be reminded in after life that he had to depend upon charity for his education. Contrarily, where is the person who will not recall with pride those days, if he had the good fortune to have had them, when he worked in a carpentry shop or the like for the sake of educating himself—mind, body and soul ?[22]

Intellectual Development or Dissipation ?

I HOLD that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, *e.g.*, hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc. In other words, an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lop-sided affair. By spiritual training I mean education of the heart. A proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculteis of the child. They constitute an indivisible whole. According to this theory, therefore, it would be a gross fallacy to suppose that they can be developed piecemeal or independently of one another.

The baneful effects of absence of proper co-ordination and harmony among the various faculties of body, mind and soul respectively are obvious. They are all around us ; only we have lost perception of them owing to our present [illegible] Take the case of our village folk-

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From their mind and soul, they have sunk to the level of the beast. Life to them is a sorry bungle which they muddle through anyhow. On the other hand, what goes by the name of education in our schools and colleges in the cities to-day is in reality only intellectual dissipation. Intellectual training is there looked upon as something altogether unrelated to manual or physical work. But since the body must have some sort of physical exercise to keep it in health, they vainly try to attain that end by means of an artificial and otherwise barren system of physical culture, which would be ridiculous beyond words if the result was not so tragic. The young man who emerges from this system can in no way compete in physical endurance with an ordinary labourer. The slightest physical exertion gives him headache ; a mild exposure to the sun is enough to cause him giddiness. And, what is more, all this is looked upon as quite 'natural'. As for the faculties of the heart, they are simply allowed to run to seed or to grow anyhow in a wild, undisciplined manner. The result is moral and spiritual anarchy. And it is regarded as something laudable.

As against this, take the case of a child in whom the education of the heart is attended to from the very beginning. Supposing he is set to some useful occupation like spinning, carpentry, agriculture, etc., for his education, and in that connection is given a thorough comprehensive knowledge relating to the theory of the various operations that he is to perform and the use and construction of the tools that he would be wielding. He would not only develop a fine, healthy body but also a sound, vigorous intellect that is not merely academic but is firmly rooted in and is tested

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from day to day by experience. His intellectual education would include a knowledge of mathematics and the various sciences that are useful for an intelligent and efficient exercise of his avocation. If to this is added literature by way of recreation, it would give him a perfect well-balanced, allround education in which the intellect, body and the spirit have all full play and develop together into a natural, harmonious whole. Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all the three is required for the making of the whole man and constitutes the true economics of education.[23]

By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itelf is no education. I would, therefore, begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. Thus, every school can be made self-supporting, the condition being that the State takes over the manufactures of these schools.

I hold that the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education. Only every handicraft has to be taught not merely mechanically, as is done to-day, but scientifically, *i.e.*, the child should know the why and the wherefore of every process. This method does not exclude a knowledge of history and geography. But I find that this is best taught by transmitting such general information by word of mouth. One imparts ten times as much in this manner as by reading and writing. The signs

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of the alphabet may be taught later when the pupil has learnt to distinguish wheat from chaff and when he has somewhat developed his or her tastes. This is a revolutionary proposal but it saves immense labour and enables a student to acquire in one year what he may take much longer to learn. This means all-round economy.[24]

University Education

UNIVERSITY education must be organically related to the Indian scene. It must, therefore, be an extension and continuation of the basic education course.

To-day the youth educated in our universities either run after Government jobs, or fall into devious ways and seek outlet for their frustration by fomenting unrest. They are not even ashamed to beg or sponge upon others.* Such is our sad plight. The aim of university education should be to turn out true servants of the people, who would live and die for the country's freedom. I am, therefore, of opinion that university education should be co-ordinated and brought into line with basic education.[25]

Culture of the Heart and the Hand

WITHOUT the culture of the heart and the hand, mere growth of literacy has no attraction for me. What is wanted, therefore, is a drastic measure giving not an indifferent manual training, but a proper occupational training specially designed to make it worthwhile for highly educated men

*" Young men and women should be ashamed of begging for the supply of their wants. If the sense of shame that wrongly attaches to physical labour could be got rid of, there is work enough and to spare for young men and women of average intelligence."

Harijan, March 5, 1933.

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not to look up to Government service but to farming or, say, weaving for their maintenance. Unless the mind of the student world is given a bent in the direction of the main and natural sources of livelihood, and is developed in a scientific spirit in keeping with the special Indian conditions, the gulf between the educated classes and the masses must widen, the former must live on the latter instead of the former living with and for the latter and sweetening their life.[26]

The introduction of manual training will serve a double purpose in a poor country like ours. It will pay for the education of our children and teach them an occupation on which they can fall back in after-life, if they choose, for earning a living. Such a system must make our childern self-reliant. Nothing will demoralize the nation so much as that we should learn to despise labour.

One word only as to the education of the heart. I do not believe, that this can be imparted through books. It can only be done through the living touch of the teacher. And, who are the teachers in the primary and even secondary schools ? Are they men and women of faith and character ? Have they themselves received the training of the heart ? Are they ever expected to take care of the permanent element in the boys and girls placed under their charge ? Is not the method of engaging teachers for lower schools an effective bar against character ? Do the teachers get even a living wage ? And we know that the teachers of primary schools are not selected for their patriotism. They only come who cannot find any other employment.[27]

Educated Unemployment

Q. There is so much overproduction of intelligence in India and so much educated unemployment. Could not this

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army of educated young men be utilized by being sent to the villages ?

A. That movement has commenced. But it is only in its infancy. And then there is no overproduction of intelligence, but overproduction of degrees. The brain power has not at all increased. Only the art of memorizing has been stimulated, and these degrees can't be carted to the villages. Only the brains, if there are any left, can be used. This reading for degrees has deprived us of initiative. It makes us unfit to go to the villages. The mechanical university study deprives us of the desire for originality ; years of memorizing causes a fatigue of the mind that makes most of us fit for clerical work.[28]

No Government can find employment for the increasing number of students year after year. The only way to solve the puzzle is to revise the common idea about education that it is a means of finding a career in life. Education should be taken for our mental and moral development. Secondly, the army of unemployed young men should realize the dignity of labour and qualify themselves for taking up the organization of the *Charkha* industry. It can take in an unlimited number of young men, if they are willing to take the necessary training and to go to the villages and to be satisfied with a modest income.[29]

Q. The problem of unemployment among the educated is assuming alarming proportions. You, of course, condemn higher education, but those of us, who have been to the University, realize that we do develop mentally there. Why should you discourage anyone from learning ? Would not a better solution be for unemployed graduates to go in for

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mass education, and let the villagers give them food in return ? And, could not Provincial Governments come to their aid and help them with some money and clothing ?

A. I am not against higher education. But I am against only a few lakhs of boys and girls receiving it at the expense of the poor tax-payers. Moreover, I am against the type of higher education that is given. It is much cry and little wool. The whole system of higher education, and for that matter all education needs radical overhauling. On the principle that every labourer is worthy of his hire, every graduate who goes to a village to serve it is entitled to be housed, fed and clothed by the villagers. And they do it, too. But they will not, when the graduate lives like *Saheblog* and costs them ten times as much as they can afford. His life must accord, as nearly as possible, with that of the villagers, and his mission must find appreciation among them.[30]

A Student's Difficulty

A STUDENT asks :

> " What should a matriculate or an undergraduate, who is unfortunately father of two or three children, do in order to procure a living wage ?"

The simplest answer that occurs to me is that a student who does not know how to support his wife and children, or who marries against his will, has studied to no purpose. But that is past history for him. The perplexed student deserves a helpful answer. He does not say what is his requirement. If he does not pitch it high because he is a matriculate and will put himself on a level with the ordinary labourer, he should

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have no difficulty in earning a livelihood. His intelligence should help his hands and feet and enable him to do better than the labourer who has had no opportunity of developing his intelligence. This is not to say that a labourer who has never learnt English is devoid of intelligence. Unfortunately, labour has never been helped to develop the mind, and those who pass through schools do have their minds opened even though under a handicap not to be found in any other part of the world. Even this mental equipment is counterbalanced by false notions of dignity inculcated during school and college days. And so students think that they can earn their living only at the desk. The inquirer has, therefore, to realize the dignity of labour and seek the maintenance of himself and his family in that field.

And there is no reason why his wife should not add to the family income by utilizing her spare hours. Similarly, if the children are at all able to do any work, they, too, should be inspanned for productive work. The utterly false idea that intelligence can be developed only through book-reading should give place to the truth that the quickest development of the mind can be achieved by artisan's work being learnt in a scientific manner. True development of the mind commences immediately the apprentice is taught at every step why a particular manipulation of the hand or a tool is required. The problem of the unemployment of students can be solved without difficulty, if they will rank themselves among the common labourers.[31]

What After Finishing Studies ?

A STUDENT has seriously posed this question : " What am I to do after finishing my studies ?"

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The prevailing education is *willy nilly* put to wrong use, *i.e.*, it is looked upon as a means of earning money and position. The ancient aphorism : ' Education is that which liberates ', is as true to-day as it was before. Education here does not mean mere spiritual knowledge, nor does liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind, and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life. Servitude is of two kinds : slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs. The knowledge acquired in the pursuit of this ideal alone constitutes true study.

A student, who is superficially attracted by the educational ideal set forth by me and leaves his studies, is liable to repent of his action later. I have, therefore, suggested a safer course. While continuing his studies in the institution which he has joined, he should ever keep before him the ideal of service set forth by me and use his studies with a view to serve that ideal, never for making money. Moreover, he should try to make up the lack in the present education by application of his leisure hours to the ideal. He will, therefore, avail himself to the utmost of whatever opportunity offers for taking part in the Constructive Programme.[32]

Sending Students to England

Q. The best men in the old generation had their education in England—you, for instance. Would you have India, when she becomes independent, send her sons there for study as before ?

A. No, not just now. I would advise her to send them there only after, say, 10 years.

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Q. It means depriving two generations of the benefits of contact with the West.

A. Why two generations ? 40 years or even 60 is not too much even in an individual's life. If there is right living, we need not grow old at 60 as unfortunately many do in this country. I repeat that they should go there only after they have reached maturity. Because, it is only when they have learnt to understand the good that is in their own culture that they will be able to truly appreciate and assimilate the best that England or America has to give them. Imagine a boy of seventeen, like myself, going to England—he will simply be submerged.[33]

Why Go Abroad?

AN Indian doctor went to America in order to learn Neuro-surgery, so that he might return and serve his people here. He has with difficulty secured a seat in the Columbia University and is working as a House Surgeon.

He writes to ask me to influence students not to go abroad for the following reasons :

> " (a) The amount our poor country spends on sending and training ten students abroad could be better utilized by securing the services of a first-rate professor who could train 40 students as well as equip a laboratory.
>
> (*b*) Students who come here acquire basic knowledge in research, but do not know how to equip a laboratory on their return home.
>
> (*c*) They have no chance of continued work.
>
> (*d*) If we have experts brought out, our laboratories will also get perfected."

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I have never been an advocate of our students going abroad. My experience tells me that such, on return, find themselvs to be square pegs in round holes. That experience is the richest and contributes most to growth which springs from the soil. But to-day the craze for going abroad has gripped students. May the extract quoted serve as a warning![34]

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CHAPTER XI

STUDENTS AND SPINNING-WHEEL

MY notions of education are so revolutionary and, as must appear to my critics, so crude. I can only think of national education in terms of *Swaraj*. Hence, I would have even the collegiates devote their attention to perfecting themselves in the art of spinning and all it means. I would have them study the economics and implications of *Khaddar*. They should know how long it takes to establish a mill and the capital required. They should know, too, the limitations on the possibility of an indefinite expansion of mills. They should know, too, the method of distribution of wealth through mills and that through hand-spinning and hand-weaving. They should know how hand-spinning and the manufacture of Indian fabrics was destroyed. They should understand and be able to demonstrate the effect of the adoption of hand-spinning in the cottages of the millions of India's peasants. They should know how a full revival of this cottage industry will weave into an undivided whole the sundered Hindu and Mussalman hearts. But these ideas are either behind the time or in advance of it. It does not matter much whether they are behind or ahead of the time. This I know that some day or other, the whole of educated India will adopt them.[1]

It is for the teachers to make the subject they teach interesting. I hated chemistry, which I subsequently learnt and appreciated as a most interesting study, only because my teacher did not know his subject sufficiently well to make it interesting. Hundreds of boys will not take to geometry, a most fascinating recreation, simply because the teachers

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have no interest in their work and they themselves have not developed thorough interest in it. Similarly, for spinning. I know of no accomplished spinner who has not acknowledged spinning even as a pastime to be an interesting and uplifting study. A mere thumping on the piano would give a headache to a most willing listener, but the exquisite touch of a master would convert even one who has no ear for music. Even so with spinning.[2]

Inwardness of the Charkha

THE music of the *Charkha* murmurs sweetly that we are all one, born to be equal sharers in the goods of the earth, with no one higher or wealthier than the other. Yet the world is to-day full of inequalities of wealth and invidious distinctions of high and low. This is folly. In our arrogance we forget that we are all one day going to be levelled with the dust by death that knows no distinctions. The second lesson is that we are to earn our bread by the sweat of our brow—what a Russian savant has called 'bread labour'; and the third is that if we are one of, and with the people, we should refuse to give food to those who are not in need or to take more than we need for health.[3]

The Virtue of Spinning

THE spinning-wheel is essentially a thing for reasoning out. With it, in my opinion, is mixed up the well-being of the whole mass of Indian humanity. Pupils should, therefore, learn something about the deep poverty of the masses. They should have an ocular demonstration of some villages that are crumbling down to pieces. They should know the population of India. They should know the vast extent of this peninsula; and they should know what it is that all

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the many millions can do to add to their scanty resources. They should learn to identify themselves with the poor and the down-trodden in the land. They should be taught to deny themselves, so far as possible, things that the poorest cannot have. Then, they will understand the virtue of spinning.[4]

Message of the Wheel

I AM not tired of preaching the message of the wheel on all occasions, at all hours, because it is such an innocent thing, and yet so potent of good. It may not be relishing, but no health-giving food has the relish of spicy foods so detrimental to health. And so the *Gita*, in a memorable text, asks all thinking people to take things of which the first taste is bitter, but which are ultimately conducive to immortality. Such a thing to-day is the spinning-wheel and its produce. There is no *Yajna* (sacrifice) greater than spinning, calculated to bring peace to the troubled spirits, to soothe the distracted student's mind, to spiritualize his life. I have to-day no better prescription for the country—not even the *Gayatri*—in this practical age which looks for immediate result. An English friend wrote saying his English common sense told him that spinning wheel was an excellent hobby. I said to him : " It may be a hobby for you, for us it is the Tree of Plenty ". I do not like many Western ways, but there are certain things in them for which I cannot disguise my admiration. Their ' hobby ' is a thing full of meaning. Col. Maddock, who was an efficient surgeon and took great delight in his task, did not devote all his hours to his work. Two hours he had set apart for his hobby which was gardening, and it was this gardening that lent zest and savour to his life.

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I have pleasure, therefore, in placing the spinning-wheel before you even as a hobby if you will, in order that your life may have zest and savour, in order that you may find peace and bliss. It will help you to lead a life of *Brahmacharya*. Faith is a thing of great moment in the student state. There are so many things which you have to take for granted. You accept them simply because you get them from your teacher. Some propositions in geometry, for instance, were very difficult of comprehension for me. I took them for granted and to-day, I, not only can understand them, but can lose myself in a study of geometry, as easily as I can do in my present work. If you have faith and ply the wheel, take it from me that some day you will admit that what an old man once told you about it was literally true. No wonder that one learned in the lore applied the following text from the *Gita* to the spinning-wheel :

> "In this there is no waste of effort; neither is there any obstacle. Even a little practice of this *dharma* saves a man from calamity".[5]

It is because I see in the spinning-wheel the hand of God working, it is because I see in the spinning-wheel the satisfaction of the needs of the meanest of human beings, that, in season and out of season, I think about it, work at it, pray about it and speak about it. If there is any other thing which can bring you nearer to the famishing people of the earth (let alone India for the time being), that can put you at once on a level with the scavenger, I will withdraw the spinning-wheel and hug that other thing in a moment. Now, you will, perhaps, also understand why I go about from door to door shamelessly and ceaselessly with the begging bowl and beg of everyone to put something into it if they will do so with a willing heart.

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Spin Destiny of India

I ASK you to spin through the spinning-wheel the destiny of India. To-day you see only a thread coming out as I turn the wheel and draw the sliver. But it is my certain conviction that with every thread that I draw, I am spinning the destiny of India. The conviction is growing upon me that without the spinning-wheel there is no salvation for this country of ours, and I ask you to set apart half an hour each day from your talking, writing or playing and devote it to spinning.[7]

[To a friend objecting that spinning was a waste of energy and time, and to another that this advice took no count of the principle of division of labour, Gandhiji unbosomed himself as follows:]

Do I ask you to do spinning for the whole of the day? Do I ask you to take it up as a substantive occupation? Where, then, is the breach of the principle of division of labour? Do you have a division of labour in eating and drinking? Just as every one of us must eat and drink and clothe himself, even so, every one of us must spin himself. And it is a waste you say? Fellow-feeling for your countrymen, you say, you have in an abundant measure? And what is that fellow-feeling without the milk of human kindness? Do you feel anything like the love that a cow feels for her calf, or a mother for her baby? The cow's udders and the mother's breast overflow with milk at the sight of their young ones. Do your hearts overflow with love at the sight of your famished countrymen? By spinning, my friends, you demonstrate your love for them. You spin and you make them shake off their idleness. A friend goes and beautifully sings before a crowd and affects their hearts. Is it a waste of effort?

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It would be, of course, if he vainly howls *Vande Mataram* before them. But spinning means more. It has a purpose and it means added production. The purpose is that it serves as a bond with the masses. And the mechanical effort has something as its result, whilst there is absolutely nothing like it which all alike can do without much effort and skill, nothing which can be done by millions by the best of us as by the mediocre. And the students should all do it particularly, because they are the salt of the earth. Their life is yet to begin, they can imbibe new ideas as no one else can ; and they have long years of service before them. You can put new wine into new bottles and not into old. And imagine what a disciplined band of students with fire, energy and reason can do. Imagine what a mighty thing it would be the product of a half-hour's labour given to hand-spinning by every one of the students ! And do you know that if you all wear *Khadi*, the spinners get a major part of the money you spend ? You will, perhaps, think of England with her elaborate machinery. But she lives on the exploitation of other nations. She has conquered our labour. It is an economic drain which is even more disastrous than the Home Charges and other drains that Dadabhai Naoroji opened our eyes to. Even he could not see this insidious drain, but I, being his disciple working along his lines, have discovered this subtle drain and say that the economic drain involved in our being made a nation of idlers is the most ruinous of all.[8]

'Prefer Death to Spinning'

IN one of my talks with students (of Bengal), one of them said :

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"Do you know why we do not spin ? There is no excitement about the wheel. Our education has unfitted us for any such work. Many of us would prefer death to spinning. Death on the gallows we can gladly embrace, but spinning is an impossibility. Give us something grand. We love romance and there is none about spinning."

I told my romantic friend that there was more romance about the spinning-wheel than he thought. And why did he accuse Bengal, that has given India a Bose and a Ray, of being purely romantic in the sense of being unpractical and dreamy ? I told him that those who found some excuse or other for not spinning, were really not lovers of the country. Would not a father follow even ridiculous instructions of physicians, if thereby his dying child could be saved ? It was common cause between my audience and me that India's millions were in a dying condition and that spinning could solve the problem of their distressful poverty.

Unfortunately, the ordinary student lacks application except for the sake of passing his examination. Real love of the country should be a far greater incentive to application than the desire to gain a pass certificate. There is as much romance about solving a difficult geometrical problem, or working an arithmetical sum requiring long additions and multiplications, as there is about spinning. And if the Bengali boy does not plead want of romance about his examinations, he has less reason to plead it about spinning, which is as necessary for national as an examination is for individual sustenance.[9]

Emblem of Peace

A STUDENT told me that he would more willingly face the gallows than ply the wheel which afforded no excitement

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I have no doubt that he believed neither in *Ahimsa* nor *Brahmacharya*. For, the wheel is an emblem of peace and *Ahimsa*, and I have pinned my faith to it because *Ahimsa* is not a policy with me, but a creed, a religion. Why do I regard it as such ? Because I know that it is not *Himsa* or destructive energy that sustains the world, it is *Ahimsa*, the creative energy. I do admit that the destructive energy is there, but it is evanescent, always futile before the creative which is permanent. If the destructive one had the upper hand, all the sacred ties—love between parents and child, brother and sister, master and disciple, rulers and the ruled,—would be snapped. *Ahimsa* is like the Sun whose worship as the symbol of God, our *Rishis* immortalized in the *Gayatri*. As the Sun ' keeps watch over man's mortality ', going his eternal rounds and dispelling darkness and sin and gloom, even so does *Ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* inspires you with love than which you cannot think of a better excitement. And that is why my faith in the wheel, which is a symbol of peace and love, is increasing as I grow older. As I am turning the wheel, I am saying to myself : ' Why does God give me my daily bread, whilst He starves multitudes of men ? Let Him starve me also, or enable me to do something to remove their starvation.' And as I turn it, I am practising *Ahimsa* and Truth which are the obverse and reverse of the same coin. *Ahimsa* is my God, and Truth is my God. When I look for *Ahimsa*, Truth says : 'Find it out through me.' When I look for Truth, *Ahimsa* says : ' Find it out through me '.[10]

The Gospel of Charkha

MAN can make a trough, can he lead unwilling horses to it ? I sympathize with young men, but I am unable to blame

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myself for their drifting. I am speaking with no uncertain voice, to all who will listen, to take up the Gospel of *Charkha*. But the fact is that the call of the *Charkha* seems to make no appeal to them. If so, there is still another much-needed work—the service of the untouchables. Here, too, there is more than enough work for all the students who are pining to do national service. Let them understand that all those who raise the moral tone of the community as a whole, all those who find occupation for the idle millions, are real builders of *Swaraj*. They will make easy even the purely political work. This positive work will evoke the best in the students. It is both post-graduate and pre-graduate work. It is the only real graduating.

But it may be that neither the *Charkha* work nor the untouchability work is exciting enough for them. Then, let them know that I am useless as a physician. I have but a limited stock of prescriptions. I believe in unity of disease and, therefore, also of cure. But must a physician be blamed for his limitations, specially when he declares them from the house-top ?

The students must be resourceful enough to find their own course in life. Self-reliance is *Swaraj*.[11]

Spinning for Gandhi or Country ?

I HAVE a letter from a professor of the *Vidyalaya* from which I learn that a hot controversy is raging in their debating hall as to whether one should spin for Gandhi, or for the country. I have been asked to settle the question for them and I will try to do it as best as I can.

There are different ways of looking at the thing, and, to me, both are right. Who is Gandhi ? He may be the hero

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of a day, and a thing done for him must cease, as soon as he ceases to hold the popular mind. At best, Gandhi is a thing or entity of a temporary nature, as compared to the country which is of a permanent nature. He is, therefore, wiser who does a thing out of allegiance to the country in preference to Gandhi. On the other hand, I can understand a thing being done for the love of Gandhi. But there are different ways of doing things for the sake of Gandhi. One may share Gandhi's faith in the *Charkha*, and yet may be too lazy to spin. It may be that Gandhi's name will help him to shake off his lethargy and, for the love of him, he may begin plying the wheel. That to me is a legitimate use of Gandhi's name. But that is the limit beyond which one could not be permitted to go.

On the contrary, one may have absolutely no faith in the *Charkha*, and yet he may reconcile himself to working it for Gandhi's sake. This last in my opinion, is hardly proper or being true to oneself, and the thing I want more than anything else to-day is being true to oneself, freedom from camouflage, freedom from hypocrisy.

There is another way of looking at the problem. There is a thing like doing something for the sake of a principle or a religious vow. In that connection, I would say that attachment or love for one's dear ones may help a man to a very great extent. But for the love I bore to my father, I might not have come to pledge myself to truth. It became an instinct with me to speak the truth, not because I realized the significance of truthfulness then, but because I felt that I must do so for the love of my father. But for my intensive love for mother similarly, I doubt if I should have escaped some

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eating and an unchaste life. Vows I regard as aids to one's attempt to secure freedom from slavery to one's own lusts.[12]

To the Banaras Hindu University Students

"YOU have had your say now. No one is listening to you. Why not stop talking of *Khaddar*?" That is the advice that is being given me in some quarters. But why should I stop reciting my favourite *mantra*, when I have before me the example of Prahalad of old refusing to give up *Ramanama* in the teeth of tortures worse than death? And I have not had to go through any tortures yet. How can I give up the only message that the condition of my country has been whispering to me? Panditji* has collected and has been still collecting lakhs and lakhs of rupees for you from *Rajas* and *Maharajas*. The money apparently comes from these wealthy princes; but, in reality, it comes from the millions of our poor. For, unlike Europe, the rich of our land grow rich at the expense of our villagers, the bulk of whom have to go without a square meal a day. The education that you receive to-day is thus paid for by the starving villagers, who will never have the chance of such an education. It is your duty to refuse to have an education that is not within the reach of the poor, but I do not ask that of you to-day. I ask you to render just a slight return to the poor by doing a little *Yajna* for them. For, he who eats without doing his *Yajna* steals his food, says the *Gita*. The *Yajna* that was required of the British civil population during the War was for each household to grow potatoes in its yard, and for each household to do a little simple sewing. The *Yajna* of our age and for us is the spinning-wheel. Day in and day

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*Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya.

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out, I have been talking about it, writing about it. I shall say no more to-day.[13]

To the Bihar Vidyapith Students

LET the *Snataks* take their degrees, learn anything they like, but let it centre round the *Charkha* ; let their economics and their science subserve the purpose of the *Charkha.* Do not relegate the *Charkha* to an old corner. The *Charkha* is the sun of the solar system of our activities. Without it, *Vidyapiths* are *Vidyapiths* in name.... Without it, we and, if I may say so, even the world, will go to rack and ruin. We know what Europe has been feeling after the War in which lies were propagated as the highest religion. The world is weary of the after-effects of the War, and even as the *Charkha* is India's comforter to-day, it may be the world's to-morrow, because it stands not for the greatest good of the greatest number, but of the greatest good of all.

Whenever I see an erring man, I say to myself : ' I have also erred '; when I see a lustful man, I say to myself : ' So was I once '; and in this way I feel kinship with everyone in the world and feel that I cannot be happy without the humblest of us being happy. It is in this sense that I want you to make the *Charkha* the centre of your studies. Just as Prahalad saw Rama everywhere and Tulsidas could see nothing but Rama even in the image of Krishna, let all your learning be directed to realizing the implications of the *Charkha.* Our science, our carpentry, our economics should all be utilized for making the *Charkha* the prop and mainstay of our poorest.[14]

To the Poona Students

IT is possible that my message, if delivered in English, might get more silver from you, and it is probable that you

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might understand me better. But I hold my message to be far superior to the vehicle through which it is expressed. It has a power all its own, and I hope it will produce an impression on the youth of India. Whether it will produce an impression in my lifetime or not, I do not care ; but my faith is immovable, and as the days roll on and as the agony of the masses becomes prolonged, it will burn itself into the heart of every Indian who has a heart to respond to the message. You must understand that, at a time of my life when I should be enjoying my well-earned rest, I am not going about from one end of the country to the other for nothing. It is because I feel within myself, with increasing force every day, the strength of my conviction that I must try until the end of my days to reach it to as many ears and hearts as possible.

You may, if you will, go on receiving that education, but do at least make a decent return for it. I know you have not taken to *Khadi*, not because you are perverse, but because you lack the conviction that there is anything like the stupendous problem of poverty and unemployment, whose existence I have been declaring from the house-tops. The King of Siam refused to believe Lord Curzon when he said to him that he was coming from a country where rivers were frozen for a part of the year. I assure you I am describing to you conditions I have seen with my own eyes when I say that 30 million people in our land have to go without a decent meal a day.[15]

To the Adi Karnataka Students

I WAS distressed, my boys, to find that you were forgetting your simple habits, and were reluctant to part with your pocket money for the sake of your brethren. I assure you

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that my father gave me no pocket money, and in no other part of India boys of the middle class are treated like you. But the State does not house and feed and educate you in order that you may learn idleness and forget simplicity and self-help. You must learn to wash your own clothes, cook your own food, and do all your work yourselves. And may I tell you ? As I look at you, I feel as though you were all foreigners. Can you tell me why ? [The best amongst the students immediately answered : 'Because we are wearing foreign cloth.'] That is very good. Now there is no reason why you should not be wearing *Khadi*, every one of you. I tell you I could give you for one-fourth the price much cleaner caps than you are wearing now. The circumstance that your superiors or your teachers do not wear *Khadi*, need not deter you. You will not drink liquor, or eat beef or carrion, because your parents or other Adi Karnatakas do so. You will, on the contrary, give up all these things, and insist on your Superintendent providing you with *Khadi* clothes, telling him that in case they are dear you would gladly curtail part of your cloth rations. You must know that there are in the country millions of children who do not get the education that you get, who do not get only the pocket money you get, but not even enough food that your pocket money could buy them. I want you for their sake to wear *Khadi* and to learn to spin.[16]

To the Science Research Students

THERE is no place here* for a rustic like me who has to stand speechless in awe and wonderment. I am not in a mood to say much. All I can say is, that all these huge labora-

*Bangalore Science Institute.

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tories and electrical apparatus you see here are due to the labour—unwilling and forced—of millions. If we were to meet the villagers and to explain to them how we are utilizing their money on buildings and plants which will never benefit them, but might perhaps benefit their posterity, they will not understand it. They will turn a cold shoulder. But we never take them into our confidence, we take it as a matter of right, and forget that the rule of 'no taxation without representation' applies to them, too. If you will really apply it to them, and realize your responsibility to render them an account, you will see that there is another side to all these appointments. You will, then, find not a little but a big corner in your hearts for them, and if you will keep it in a good nice condition, you will utilize your knowledge for the benefit of the millions on whose labour your education depends. I shall utilize the purse you have given me for *Daridranarayana*. The real *Daridranarayana* even I have not seen, but know only through my imagination. Even the spinners who will get this money are not the real *Daridranarayana* who lives in remote corners of distant villages which have yet to be explored. I was told by your professsor, that the properties of some of the chemicals will take years of experiments to explore. But who will try to explore these villages ? Just as some of the experiments in your laboratories go on for all the twenty-four hours, let the big corner in your heart remain perpetually warm for the benefit of the poor millions.

I expect far more from you than from the ordinary man in the street. Don't be satisfied with having given the little you have done, and say : 'We have done what we could, let

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us now play tennis and billiards.' I tell you, in the billiard-room and on the tennis court, think of the big debt that is being piled against you from day to day. But beggars cannot be choosers. I thank you for what you have given me. Think of the prayer I have made and translate it into action. Don't be afraid of wearing the cloth the poor women make for you, don't be afraid of your employers showing you the door if you wear *Khadi*. I would like you to be men, and stand up before the world firm in your convictions. Let your zeal for the dumb millions be not stifled in search for wealth. I tell you, you can devise a far greater wireless instrument, which does not require external research, but internal, and all research will be useless if it is not allied to internal research, which can link your hearts with those of the millions. Unless all the discoveries that you make have the welfare of the poor as the end in view, all your workshops will be really no better than Satan's workshops, as Rajagopalachari said in joke. Well, I have given you enough food for thought, if you are in a reflective mood, as all research students ought to be.[17]

To the Sindh Students

AS students of economics, you ought to know that the fees that you pay do not cover even a fraction of the amount that is spent on your education from the public exchequer. Has it ever occurred to you, my fine young men, as to where the rest of the money comes from ? It comes from the pocket of the poor—the living skeletons of Orissa who go about with lack-lustre eyes and despair written on their face and a gnawing hunger in their stomach from year's end to year's end, eking out their existence on a handful of rotten rice

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and a pinch of dirty salt flung at them by the insulting munificence of the rich Gujaratis and Marwadis ? What have you done for these brethren of yours ? Instead of wearing homespun *Khadi*, prepared by the pure hands of your sisters that brings them a few additional coppers, you go in for foreign stuffs thereby helping to send 60 crores of rupees out of the country annually and to snatch away the bread from the mouths of the poor of India.* The result is that the country is ground to powder. Our commerce, instead of enriching our country, has become an instrument of our exploitation, and our commercial classes have been reduced to the position of commission agents of Lancashire and Manchester, getting hardly 5 per cent as their share of the profits of the trade, out of which is built all the seeming magnificence of our big cities.

It was Lord Salisbury, who had observed on a historic occasion that since India had to be bled, the lancet must be applied to the congested parts. And if revenue had to be derived by the process of bleeding in Lord Salisbury's time, how much more so it must be now, when India had become poorer as a result of all these years of exploitation ? You should not forget that it is out of this revenue, which

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*" My heart burns with agony when I see young men dressed in foreign caps and clothes. It is surprising that they do not see that whilst the rupees that they spend on foreign caps are wasted, the annas that they need spend on *Khadi* caps all go to the pockets of the poor. The man who shuts his eyes to the poor of his land and seeks to befriend the poor of the world must be mad indeed. God will find him guilty of arrogating to himself His function. The Hindu who recites his *Gayatri* regularly and the Mussalman who says his *Namaz* five times a day are doing so in vain, if they have no corner in their hearts for the poor of their land."

— *Young India*, March 10, 1927.

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represents the life-blood of the Indian masses, that your education is financed. And again, do you realize that the education which you receive is at the expense of the degradation of your countrymen, since money spent on it is derived from the notorious liquor revenue ? Before God's judgement seat, therefore, you will have to answer the dread question : 'What has thou done with thine brothers ?' What answer will you then make ?[18]

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CHAPTER XII

STUDENTS AND SWADESHI

THROUGHOUT my travels, I have been asked about the immediate need of India. And, perhaps, I would not do better than repeat the answer I have given elsewhere. In general terms, a proper religious spirit is the greatest and most immediate need. But I know that this is too general an answer to satisfy anybody. And, it is an answer true for all time. What, therefore, I desire to say is, that owing to the religious spirit being dormant in us, we are living in a state of perpetual fear. We fear the temporal as well as the spiritual authority. We dare not speak out our minds before our priests and our *Pandits*. We stand in awe of the temporal power. I am sure that in so doing, we do a disservice to them and us.

In my humble opinion, fearlessness is the first thing indispensable before we could achieve anything permanent and real. This quality is unattainable without religious consciousness. Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man. If we grasp the fact that there is a Divinity within us which witnesses everything we think or do, and which protects us and guides us along the true path, it is clear that we shall cease to have any other fear on the face of the earth save the fear of God. Loyalty to the Governor of Governors supersedes all other loyalty and gives an intelligent basis to the latter.

And when we have sufficiently cultivated this spirit of fearlessness, we shall see that there is no salvation for us without true *Swadeshi*, not the *Swadeshi* which can be conveniently

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put off. *Swadeshi*, for me, has a deeper meaning. I would like us to apply it in our religious, political and economic life. It is not, therefore, merely confined to wearing on occassion a *Swadeshi* cloth. That we have to do for all time, not out of a spirit of jealousy or revenge, but because it is a duty we owe to our dear country. We commit a breach of the *Swadeshi* spirit certainly, if we wear foreign made cloth, but we do so also if we adopt the foreign cut. Surely, the style of our dress has some correspondence with our environment. In elegance and tastefulness, it is immeasurably superior to the trousers and the jacket. An Indian, wearing a shirt flowing over his *pyjamas* with a waist-coat on it without a necktie and its flaps hanging loose behind, is not a very graceful spectacle.[1]

Our National Dress

MY familiarity with the minor amenities of Western civilization has taught me to respect my national costume....I wear the national dress because it is the most natural and the most becoming for an Indian. I believe that our copying of the European dress is a sign of our degradation, humiliation and our weakness ; and that we are committing a national sin in discarding a dress which is best suited to the Indian climate and which, for its simplicity, art and cheapness, is not to be beaten on the face of the earth, and which answers hygienic requirements. Had it not been for a false pride and equally false notions of prestige, Englishmen here would long ago have adopted the Indian costume.[2]

The students are taught at an impressionable period of their lives to discard national dress. As a matter of fact, Indian shoes for the Indian climate are infinitely superior to

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the English shoes as being airy and, therefore, more hygienic. The introduction of socks is inelegant and totally useless for the hot climate of India. Sock wearers know the stench that their socks emit in this climate. But for our slavery, we would sweep away without a moment's thought all these injurious and unbecoming innovations.[3]

National v. Foreign Culture

IF we have no regard for our respective vernaculars, if we dislike our clothes, if our dress repels us, if we are ashamed to wear the sacred *Shikha*, if our food is distasteful to us, our climate is not good enough, our people uncouth and unfit for our company, our civilization faulty and the foreign attractive, in short, if everything native is bad and everything foreign pleasing to us, I should not know what *Swaraj* can mean for us. If everything foreign is to be adopted, surely it will be necessary for us to continue long under foreign tutelage, because foreign civilization has not permeated the masses. It seems to me that, before we can appreciate *Swaraj*, we should have not only love but passion for *Swadeshi*. Every one of our acts should bear the *Swadeshi* stamp. *Swaraj* can only be built upon the assumption that most of what is national is, on the whole, sound.

Every country that has carried on the *Swaraj* movement has fully appreciated the *Swadeshi* spirit. The Scotch Highlanders hold on to their kilts even at the risk of their lives. We humorously call the Highlanders the " Petticoat Brigade". But the whole world testifies to the strength that lies behind that petticoat, and the Highlanders of Scotland will not abandon it even though it is an inconvenient dress and an easy target for the enemy.

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The object in developing the foregoing argument is not that we should treasure our faults, but that what is national, even though comparatively less agreeable, should be adhered to ; and that what is foreign should be avoided, though it may be more agreeable than our own. That which is wanting in our civilization can be supplied by proper effort on our part.[4]

Dhoti-cum-Sola Hat

THIS is an old controversy. My narrow nationalism rebels against the hat, my secret internationalism regards the sola hat as one of the few boons from Europe. But for the tremendous national prejudice against the hat, I would undertake to become President of a League for Popularising Sola Hats. In my opinion, educated India has erred in taking to (in this climate) unnecessary, unhygienic, inelegant trousers and in betraying general hesitation to take up the sola hat. But I know that national likes and dislikes are not governed by reason. The Scotch Highlander will run the risk of being singled out by his kilt as an easy target for the enemy, but will not abandon the awkward kilt. I do not expect India to take kindly to the sola hat. Nevertheless, workers need not be ruffled by criticism and may certainly wear *Khadi* imitations of the sola hat. It is in reality an easily portable umbrella that covers the head without the necessity of one hand being occupied in carrying it. The Calcutta policeman, who shades his head from the fierce sun by sustaining an umbrella in his belt, puts himself under a double handicap when pitted against his European fellow-member. Those who have strong prejudices against sola hats should study the contrast I have described. I may be

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draw the reader's attention to an indigenous and effective equivalent of the hat that is very generally worn by the poor farmers of Malabar. It is an umbrella without the handle, made of leaves with a bark hoop to fit the head. It is cheap, thoroughly effective and in no way akin to the hat and yet almost just as serviceable.[5]

To use foreign articles rejecting those that are manufactured in India, is to be untrue to India. It is an unwarranted indulgence. To use foreign articles because we do not like indigenous ones, is to be a foreigner. It is obvious that we cannot reject indigenous articles, even as we cannot reject the native air and the native soil because they are inferior to foreign air and soil.[6]

Definition of Swadeshi

AFTER much thinking, I have arrived at a definition of *Swadeshi* that perhaps best illustrates my meaning. *Swadeshi* is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion, that is, the use of my immediate religious surroundings. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics, I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics, I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such *Swadeshi*, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium. And as we do not abandon our pursuit after

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the millenium, because we do not expect quite to reach it within our times, so may we not abandon *Swadeshi*, even though it may not be fully attained for generations to come.[7]

My definition of *Swadeshi* is well known. I must not serve my distant neighbour at the expense of the nearest. It is never vindictive or punitive. It is in no sense narrow, for I buy from every part of the world what is needed for my growth. I refuse to buy from anybody anything, however nice or beautiful, if it interferes with my growth or injures those whom Nature has made my first care. I buy useful healthy literature from every part of the world. I buy surgical instruments from England, pins and pencils from Austria and watches from Switzerland. But I will not buy an inch of finest cotton fabric from England or Japan or any other part of the world, because it has injured and increasingly injures the millions of the inhabitants of India. I hold it to be sinful for me to continue to buy the cloth spun and woven by the needy millions of India's paupers and to buy foreign cloth, although it may be superior in quality to the Indian hand-spun. My *Swadeshi*, therefore, chiefly centres round the hand-spun *Khaddar* and extends to everything that can be and is produced in India. My nationalism is as broad as my *Swadeshi*. I want India to rise so that the whole world may be benefitted. I do not want India to rise on the ruin of other nations. If, therefore, India was strong and able, India would send out to the world her treasures of art and health-giving spices, but will refuse to send out opium or intoxicating liquors, although the traffic may bring much material benefit to India.[8]

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Hypnotic Dazzle of the West

I AM no indiscriminate superstitious worshipper of all that goes under the name of 'ancient'. I never hesitate to endeavour to demolish all that is evil or immoral, no matter how ancient it may be, but with that reservation. I must confess to you that I am an adorer of ancient institutions, and it hurts me to think that a people in their rush for everything modern despise all their ancient traditions and ignore them in their lives.

We of the East, very often, hastily consider that all that our ancestors laid down for us was nothing but a bundle of superstitions ; but my own experience, extending now over a fairly long period of the inestimable treasures of the East, has led me to the conclusion that, whilst there may be much that was superstitious, there is infinitely more which is not only not superstitious, but if we understand it correctly and reduce it to practice, gives life and ennobles one. Let us not, therefore, be blinded by the hypnotic dazzle of the West.[9]

Revival of Ancient Culture

IN trying to explore the hidden treasures of ancient culture, I have come upon this inestimable boon that all that is permanent in ancient Hindu culture, is also to be found in the teachings of Jesus, Buddha, Mohammed and Zoroaster. So I have come to this workable arrangement for myself. If I find anything in Hinduism which is ancient, but repugnant to my Christian brother or my Mussalman brother, I immediately begin to fidget and doubt the ancientness of that claim. So I came, by a process of examination, to this irresistible conclusion, that there was nothing so very ancient

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in this world as these two good old things—Truth and Non-violence. And working along these lines of Truth and Non-violence, I also discovered that I must not attempt to revive ancient practices if they were inconsistent with, call it if you will, modern life as it must be lived. Ancient practices may have been perfectly good, and perhaps absolutely necessary at the time when these practices were adopted, but they might be entirely out of date with modern needs and still not be contrary to Truth or Non-violence.

Then, you can see how safe the road becomes in front of you and me when we summarily and mercilessly reject untouchability, *Devadasi* institution, drunkenness, sacrifice of animals in the very name of God whom we call Compassionate, All-merciful, Forgiving. We can unhesitatingly and summarily reject all these things, because they do not appeal to our moral sense. So much with reference to the negative side of it, but there is a positive side to it which is just as important as the negative.

In putting before you the positive side, let me draw for you one very necessary corollary to the Doctrine of Non-violence. The corollary or the deduction is this : that if we are to be non-violent, we must, then, not wish for anything on this earth which the meanest or the lowest of human beings cannot have. If that is a sound proposition—and I claim that it is a direct corollary from the Doctrine of Non-violence—then, if you accept it, then it follows that we may not barter away our ancient simplicity for anything on this earth. Now, you will, perhaps, understand my determined opposition to the modern rush, the hypnotic dazzle that seems almost to overcome us and overtake us ; and that is coming to us with such violent force from the West.[10]

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I have been watching, not without considerable anxiety, the craze for fashion which has now seized the young men belonging to the higher classes. Little do they know how by being slaves to this hypnotic dazzle from the West they are isolating themselves from their poorest countrymen who can never adopt those fashions. I cannot help thinking that it would be a great national catastrophe, a great national tragedy, if you were to barter away your simplicity for this tinsel splendour.[11]

Swadeshi in Religion

SWADESHI in religion teaches one to measure the glorious past and re-enact it in the present generation. The pandemonium that is going on in Europe shows that modern civilization represents forces of evil and darkness, whereas the ancient, *i.e.*, Indian civilization represents in its essence the Divine Force. Modern civilization is chiefly materialistic, as ours is chiefly spiritual. Modern civilization occupies itself in the investigation of the laws of matter, and employs the human ingenuity in inventing or discovering means of production and weapons of destruction, ours is chiefly occupied in exploring spiritual laws.

Our *Shastras* lay down unequivocally that a proper observance of Truth, chastity, scrupulous regard for all life, abstention from coveting others' possessions and refusal to hoard anything but what is necessary for our daily wants is indispensable for a right life, that without it a knowledge of the Divine Element is an impossibility. Our civilization tells us with daring certainty that a proper and perfect cultivation of the quality of *Ahimsa*, which, in its active form, means purest love and pity, brings the whole world to

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our feet. The author of this discovery gives a wealth of illustration which carries conviction with it.... It should be remembered that in practising *Ahimsa*, there need not be any reciprocation, though, as a matter of fact, in its final stages, it commands reciprocation. Many of us believe, and I am one of them, that through our civilization we have a message to deliver to the world.[12]

Ahimsa in Education

WHERE the whole atmosphere is redolent with the pure fragrance of *Ahimsa*, boys and girls studying together will live like brothers and sisters in freedom, and yet in self-imposed restraint ; the students will be bound to the teachers in ties of filial love, mutual respect and mutual trust. This pure atmosphere will of itself be a continual object lesson in *Ahimsa*. The students brought up in such an atmosphere will always distinguish themselves by their charity and breadth of view, and a special talent for service. Social evils will cease to present any difficulty to them, the very intensity of their love being enough to burn out those evils. For instance, the very idea of child-marriage will appear repugnant to them. They will not even think of penalising the parents of brides by demanding dowries from them. And, how dare they after marriage regard their wives as chattel or simply a means of gratifying their lust ? How will a young man, brought up in such an environment of *Ahimsa*, ever think of fighting a brother of his or of a different faith ? At any rate, no one will think of calling himself a votary of *Ahimsa* and do all or any of these things.

To sum up, *Ahimsa* is a weapon of matchless potency. It is the *summum bonum* of life. It is an attribute of the brave ;

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in fact, it is their all. It does not come within reach of the coward. It is no wooden or lifeless dogma, but a living and life-giving force. It is the special attribute of the soul: That is why it has been described as the highest *dharma* (law). In the hands of the educationist, therefore, it ought to take the form of the purest love, ever fresh and ever gushing spring of life, expressing itself in every act. Ill-will cannot stand in its presence. The sun of *Ahimsa* carries all the hosts of darkness such as hatred, anger and malice before himself. *Ahimsa* in education shines clear and far, and can no more be hidden, even as the sun cannot be hidden by any means.[13]

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CHAPTER XIII

STUDENTS AND VILLAGE SERVICE

THE only living tie of service that can bind the villagers to us is the spinning-wheel. The education is not 'national' that takes no account of the starving millions of India, and that devises no means for their relief. Government contact with the villages ends with the collection of revenue. Our contact with them begins with their service through the spinning-wheel, but it does not end there. The spinning-wheel is the centre of that service.

If you spend your next vacation in some far-off village in the interior, you will see the truth of my remark. You will find the people cheerless and fear-stricken. You will find houses in ruins. You will look in vain for any sanitary or hygienic conditions. You will find the cattle in a miserable way, and yet you will see idleness stalking there. The people will tell you of the spinning-wheel having been in their homes long ago, but to-day they will entertain no talk of it or of any other cottage industry. They have no hope left in them. They live, for they cannot die at will. They will spin only if you spin. Even if a hundred out of a population of 300 in a village spin, you assure them of an additional income of Rs. 1,800 a year. You can lay the foundation of solid reform on this income in every village. It is easy I know to say this, but difficult to do. Faith can make it easy. 'I am alone, how can I reach seven hundred thousand villages?'—this is the argument that pride whispers to us. Start with the faith that if you fix yourself up in one single village and succeed, the rest will follow. Progress is then assured.

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What May Youth Do

WE are inheritors of a rural civilization. The vastness of our country, the vastness of the population, the situation and the climate of the country have, in my opinion, destined it for a rural civilization. Its defects are well-known, but not one of them is irremediable. To uproot it and substitute for it an urban civilization seems to be an impossibility, unless we are prepared by some drastic means to reduce the population from three hundred million to three, or say even thirty. I can, therefore, suggest remedies on the assumption that we must perpetuate the present rural civilization, and endeavour to rid it of its acknowledged defects. This can only be done if the youth of the country will settle down to village life. And if they will do this, they must reconstruct their life and pass every day of their vacation in the villages surrounding their colleges or high schools, and those who have finished their education, or are not receiving any, should think of settling down in villages. The All-India Spinners' Association, with all its multifarious branches and institutions that have sprung up under its protection, affords an easy opportunity to the students to qualify themselves for service and to maintain themselves honourably, if they will be satisfied with the simple life which obtains in the villages. It can take in almost an unlimited number of earnest, honest and industrious young men who will not be ashamed of manual work. Then, there are national educational institutions affording a similar though limited scope, limited only because national education is not in fashion. I, therefore, commend to the attention of all earnest young men who are dissatisfied with their existing surroundings and outlook,

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to study these two great national institutions which are doing silent but most effective constructive work, and which present the youth of the country with an opportunity both for service and for honourable maintenance. Whether, however, they avail themselves of these two great nation-building agencies or do not, let them penetrate the villages and find an unlimited scope for service, research and true knowledge. Professors would do well not to burden either their boys or girls with literary studies during the vacation, but prescribe to them educative outings in the villages. Vacations must be utilized for recreation, never for memorizing books.[2]

Definite Suggestions

THE students should devote the whole of their vacation to village service. To this end, instead of taking their walks along beaten paths, they should walk to the villages within easy reach of their institutions, and study the condition of the village-folk and befriend them. This habit will bring them in contact with the villagers who, when the students actually go to stay in their midst, will, by reason of the previous occasional contact, receive them as friends rather than as strangers to be looked upon with suspicion. During the long vacation, the students will stay in the villages, and offer to conduct classes for adults, and to teach the rules of sanitation to the villagers, and attend to the ordinary cases of illness. They will also introduce the spinning-wheel amongst them and teach them the use of every spare minute. In order that this may be done, students and teachers will have to revise their ideas of the uses of vacation. Often do thoughtless teachers prescribe lessons to be done during the vaca-

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tion. This, in my opinion, is in any case a vicious habit. Vacation is just the period when students' minds should be free from the routine work, and be left free for self-help and original development. The village work, I have mentioned, is easily the best form of recreation and light instruction. It is obviously the best preparation for dedication to exclusive village service after finishing the studies.

The scheme for full village service does not now need to be elaborately described. Whatever was done during the vacation, has now to be put on a permanent footing. The villagers will also be prepared for a fuller response. The village life has to be touched at all points—the economic, the hygienic, the social and the political. The immediate solution of the economic distress is, undoubtedly, the wheel in the vast majority of cases. It at once adds to the income of the villagers, and keeps them from mischief. The hygienic includes insanitation and disease. Here, the student is expected to work with his own body and labour to dig trenches for burying excreta and other refuse and turning them into manure, for cleaning wells and tanks, for building easy embankments, removing rubbish, and, generally, to make the villages more habitable. The village worker has also to touch the social side, and gently persuade the people to give up bad customs and bad habits, such as untouchability, infant marriages, unequal matches, drink and drug evil, and many local superstitions. Lastly, comes the political part. Here, the worker will study the political grievances of the villagers and teach them the dignity of freedom, self-reliance and self-help in everything. This makes, in my opinion, complete village education. But this does not complete the

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task of the village worker. He must take care and charge of the little ones, and begin their instruction, and carry on a night school for adults. This literary training is but part of a whole education course, and only a means to the larger end described above.

I claim that the equipment for this service is a large heart and a character above suspicion. Given these two conditions, every other needed qualification *is* bound to follow.

The last question is that of bread and butter. A labourer is worthy of his hire.... A living wage is assured. Beyond that there is no money in it. You cannot serve both self and country. Service of self is strictly limited by that of the country, and hence excludes a living beyond the means of this absolutely poor country. To serve our villages is to establish *Swaraj*. Everything else is but an idle dream.[3]

Character and Village Organization

VILLAGE organization seems a simple word but it means the organization of the whole of India, inasmuch as India is predominantly rural. Sir Henry Maine has left a work on Village Communitties which every one might treasure. He has shown to India and to the world that the village life of India to-day is what it was five thousand years ago, which does not imply that the Indians are barbarous. On the contrary, the writer has made it clear that the Indian village life has so much vitality and character that it has persisted all these long years and weathered many a storm. He has described these villages as so many village republics, completely self-contained, having all that one may want—schools, arbitration boards, sanitation boards, and no Poor Law indeed, but ample provision for the relief of the poor

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He has also shown the treasures of art that the genius of the Indian villager has produced. The villager then learnt from his parents by word of mouth all the wisdom that he should learn. In daily contact with people, he was able to realize the value and possibility of personality. To him, the village headman was a personality in himself. He was not the impostor of to-day; he was the servant of the people whom they could go to in times of difficulties, whom every child in the village knew and loved. He was incorruptible, he was a gentleman. But such a one is a rare bird to-day. What has come over this land that all these beautiful things are not to be found anywhere, that instead of those self-contained villages of a few hundred years ago, we find villages dependent for their very necessities of life on Lancashire or Japan ? The whole village life is broken. People are dying by millions of malaria, hookworm and other diseases, all brought about by insanitation, deep poverty, sloth and idleness. There is no occupation save agriculture, no work and no savings, unemployment for four months and even six months in the year in the villages. That is the problem before village organisers and in the solution of that problem, the power of personality could be made to be felt.

I say go with your character to the villages and express it through some loving act of service or kindness. It will be instinctively understood and responded to. Let any young man, who has a character to save, venture out to the villages and he will get a response. But he will have to be patient and truthful. There is no character where there is no patience and truth and gentleness and humility. He will not go out as a patron-saint of the villages, she will have to go in humi-

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lity with a broomstick in his hand. There is a Trinity of Evil—insanitation, poverty and idleness—that you will have to be faced with and you will fight them with broomsticks, quinine and castor oil, and, if you will believe me, with the spinning-wheel. But all these will not help you without character. You must come down from your high pedestals, stoop to conquer, take the risk of catching malaria yourself. This work will give you all the satisfaction that your soul can desire. It will enrich the villagers' life and your life.[4]

Social service is impossible without character and that such service on a large scale in India is only possible through penetration into the villages, and that it has to be its own reward for it brings no excitement, no advertisement, and has often to be done under most trying circumstances and in the teeth of superstition and ignorance. The best form that social service can take in India is through the spinning-wheel and *Khaddar*, because it brings young men in touch with the villagers, it enables them to put a few coppers every day into the pockets of the villagers, and creates an indissoluble bond between the latter and themselves, and it helps them to know their Maker because the selfless service of the poor is the service of God.[5]

The Village Medical Work

I HAVE experience of this work since my early days in South Africa. Let me then begin with a warning. By taking a little medical aid to them, you do not really help them. You must teach them sanitation and hygiene, which alone can prevent malaria. Quinine does seem to subdue malaria, but will not root it out. What is essential is the

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preventive treatment and the after-care of patients. They do not know that careless diet often prepares the breeding ground for malaria germs. They eat anything and everything. But a malaria patient must eschew starch, too much protein, and live mainly on milk during convalescense. That is what you have to tell them. Teach them how to prevent disease. I will not congratulate you if you tell me that you have distributed a thousand quinine pills. Give them practical lessons in sanitation, if you can. Go there with spades and shovels, fill up stagnant pools, see to the drainage, see that their wells are properly dredged and that their tank is not contaminated. The late Principal Rudra, under whose hospitable roof I have had the privilege of living, used to tell me how Delhi had fought a successful battle against the swamps and mosquito-breeding pools around Delhi. We have now to teach the people to do what the Municipality or the Local Boards may not do, for want of funds or any other reason.

Above all, teach them to rid their village of filth and dirt. It is the most difficult part of your work, unless you would be willing scavengers. For days, you must sweep the streets and teach them to preserve health and conserve their golden manure at one and the same time. Poore's *Rural Hygiene* used to be a precious little book on this subject. You have to teach them to bury their night soil in nine-inch deep pits and cover it up with earth, the principle being that that such earth is full of life and that the sun's rays penetrate that depth. In a little while the whole will be converted into rich manure, and you can grow the finest vegetables on this ground.

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I had better tell you about internal hygiene, too. You must study the problem of food from the point of view of health, know the foods charged with vitamins and persuade them to eat hand-husked unpolished rice, whole wheatmeal, whole sugar, greens grown on their own patch of ground, and oil fresh-pressed in the village oil-press. Every doctor now-a-days insists on prescribing a few green leaves to be eaten raw. Every peasant could grow all kinds of *bhaji* for nothing and eat it raw as part of his normal diet. It was discovered during the War that compressed and dried vegetables were harmful and that, not lime-juice, but the juice pressed out of fresh limes, was the preventive of scurvy.

"Could you tell us what we should teach in a little Harijan school we are running?"

All that I have told you. Let me assure you that education in three R's is as nothing compared to a sound grounding in the elements of hygiene and sanitation. I happened to see a number of Harijan girls learning in a school. As soon as I saw them, my eyes caught sight of their dirty nails, dirtier noses and dirt-accumulating little trinkets on their noses and their ears. This thing had apparently never struck the good woman who was in charge of them. Teach them first the lessons of cleanliness. Literary training by itself is not of much account. Take care of the essentials I have told you. Remember that unlettered persons have found no difficulty in ruling over large States. President Kruger could hardly sign his own name. Teach them the three R's by all means, but don't make a fetish of them.[6] *

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*"But although much good and useful work can be done without a knowledge of the three R's, it is my firm belief that we cannot always do without such knowledge. It develops and sharpens one's intellect, and it increases our capacity of doing good.... It is no exaggeration to say that a human being without education is not far removed from an animal."

6. *Speeches & Writings of M. Gandhi*, p. 423.

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To the Village Workers

I PROPOSE to speak to you about the ideal of work and life that you have to keep in view and work towards. You are here* not for a career in the current sense of the term. To-day man's worth is measured in Rs. as. ps. and a man's educational training is an article of commerce. If you have come with that measure in mind, you are doomed to disappointment. At the end of your studies, you may start with an honorarium of ten rupees and end with it. You may not compare it with what a manager of a great firm or a high official gets.

We have to change the current standards. We promise you no earthly careers. In fact, we want to wean you from ambition of that kind. You are expected to bring your food-bill within Rs. 6 a month. The food-bill of an I.C.S. may come to Rs. 60 a month, but that does not mean that he is or will be on that account physically or intellectually or morally superior to you. He may be for all his sumptuous living even inferior in all these respects. You have come to the institution because, I presume, you do not value your qualifications in metal. You delight in giving your service to the country for a mere pittance. A man may earn thousands of rupees on the Stock Exchange, but may be thoroughly useless for our purposes. They would be unhappy in our humble surroundings, and we should be unhappy in theirs. We want ideal labourers in the country's cause. They will not bother about what food they get, or what comforts

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*Training School for Village Workers, Maganwadi, Wardha.

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they are assured by the villagers whom they serve. They will trust in God for whatever they need, and will exult in the trials and tribulations they might have to undergo. This is inevitable in our country where we have 7,00,000 villages to think of. We cannot afford to have a salaried staff of workers who have an eye to regular increments, provident funds and pensions. Faithful service of the villagers is its own satisfaction.

Some of you will be tempted to ask if this is also the standard for the villagers. Not by any means. These prospects are for us servants, and not for the village-folk our masters. We have sat on their backs all these years, and we want to accept voluntary and increasing poverty in order that our masters' lot may be much better than it is to-day. We have to enable them to earn much more than they are earning to-day.... May you be such servants! [7]

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CHAPTER XIV

STUDENTS AND HARIJAN SERVICE

I AM a humble servant of India, and in trying to serve India, I serve humanity at large. I discovered in my early days that the service of India is not inconsistent with the service of humanity. As I grew older in years, and I hope also in wisdom, I saw that the discovery was well made, and after nearly 50 years of public life, I am able to say to-day that my faith in the doctrine, that the service of one's nation is not inconsistent with the service of the world, has grown. It is a good doctrine. Its acceptance alone will ease the situation in the world and stop the mutual jealousies between nations inhabiting this globe of ours.

In taking up this war against untouchability, I have not confined myself to Hinduism. I have said more than once that, if untouchability is removed in its fullness from the Hindu heart, it will have far-reaching consequences inasmuch as it touches millions of human beings.... If untouchability is really removed from the Hindu heart, that is, if the high-caste Hindus purge themselves of this terrible taint, we shall soon discover that we are all one and not different peoples—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, whatever we may call ourselves. We shall feel the unity, once the barrier of untouchability is removed. As I have often said, untouchability is a hydra-headed monster, appearing in many shapes. Some of them are very subtle. If I have jealousy for any human being, that also is a species of untouchability. I do not know if my dream about the removal of untouchability will be fully realized while I am living. All those who are religiously inclined, those who believe in finding their final religion

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but in the essence of religion cannot but believe in the removal of a subtle type of untouchability that affects the lives of a vast mass of humanity. If Hindu hearts can be purged of this evil, our eyes of understanding will be more and more opened. It is not possible to estimate the gain to humanity when untouchability is really removed. You can now have no difficulty in understanding why I have staked my life for this one thing.[1]

Branches of the Same Tree

I AM trying to serve all communities to-day through this work. They are branches of one big family. I have found in the Hindu branch a disease which, if not removed in time, will spread through the whole family and destroy it. The evil of untouchability has travelled far beyond its prescribed limits. In trying to root out untouchability among Hindus, I am trying to serve all the communities. Though the method of achieving communal unity through conferences has failed, I have not despaired of a heart-unity being achieved in the end. God has sent me this work, and I am doing it in the faith that the way to a real communal unity will be paved through it. It is thus, to my mind, a service of the whole nation. The effort I made in 1920-21 to achieve Hindu-Muslim unity, will go down to history and will serve as the foundation of the edifice of communal unity whenever it is achieved. I have never repented for having made that effort. For me, it was not a matter of expedience. I am not aware of having done a single thing in my life as a matter of expedience. I have ever held that the highest morality is also the highest expedience. Some European friends assure me that I am waging this war against untouchability on behalf of the whole of humanity. Once this [illegible] is

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removed from Hinduism, Hindus, Mussalmans and others will sink their differences and will embrace one another as blood-brothers, and all communities will feel that they are all branches of the same tree.[2]

Students' Part

IF you, the students, have followed me so far and understood the implications of this mission of mine, you will soon extend the help I want from you. Many students have written to me asking what part they can take in helping this movement. It is a surprise to me that students are obliged to ask this question. The field is so vast and near you, that you need not ask the question as to what you may do and what you may not... As this is a humanitarian campaign, students must devote a part of their spare time, if not the whole, to the service of thousands of Harijans... I have found that, if I get many helpers who can give their spare time, much work can be done. This work cannot be done by hired labour. With hired labour we cannot go to Harijan quarters and sweep their roads, enter their houses and wash their children.

A Harijan teacher has shown what a Herculean task it is for him to tackle. Even wild children are better than Harijan children. Wild children are not sunk in utter degradation, as the Harijan children are, nor do they live in such filthy surroundings. This problem cannot be tackled by hired labour. No amount of money can enable me to do this. It must be your prerogative. It is an acid test of the education received by you in schools and colleges. Your worth will not be measured by your ability to make faultless English speeches. Your worth will be measured by the

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service you render to the poor, and not by Government posts worth Rs. 60 or Rs. 600 that you may have got. I wish you would do this work in the spirit I suggest. I have not met a single student who has said that he cannot spare one hour per day. If you write your diary from day to day, you will find that you waste many a precious hour in the 365 days of the year. If you want to turn your education to good account, you will turn your attention to this work. Erstwhile students are serving Harijans within a radius of 5 miles round about Wardha. They are doing good silent work; therefore, you do not know them. I invite you to see their work. It is hard but pleasurable. It will give you joy, greater than your cricket or tennis....I would ask you to pledge yourselves to devote a definite number of spare hours to Harijan service.[3]

The Wider Message

MY message is exceedingly simple. It is no new truth that has dawned upon me to-day. I have, to the best of my ability, striven to live up to it for the last fifty years. And the more I have succeeded in living up to it, the greater has been my inward joy. Nor is it for the first time that I am delivering this message to India. But because of some incidents in the recent past, it comes to the people as a new thing. My messsage is simply this : that *savarna* Hindus, who have been considering themselves superior to those whom they have called untouchables, unapproachables, invisibles, or *avarna* Hindus, should realize that this arrogation of superiority has no sanction whatsoever in the *Shastras*. If I discovered that those scriptures, which are known as *Vedas*,

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Upanishads, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Smritis*, etc., clearly showed that they claimed Divine authority for untouchability as I have described it to you, then, nothing on this earth would hold me to Hinduism. I should throw it overboard, as I should throw overboard a rotten apple. My reason is offended and my heart is wounded at the very thought that God Himself, Who has created both *savarna* Hindus and *avarna* Hindus, should impose this bar sinister between His children. The very thought that the *Rishis* who gave the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, and who, in every *mantra* that they pronounced, taught the unity of God, could ever conceive of any such thing as untouchability, as it is practised to-day in Hinduism, must be repugnant to every intelligent person. But prejudice and superstitions die hard. They cloud the reason, befog the intellect and harden the heart. And so you find learned men defending this untouchability.

But you, students, should know that behind this message there lurks also a much greater message. This monster of untouchability has invaded every form of society in India ; and the idea behind this message is that there should be, not only no untouchability as between Hindus and Hindus, but that there should be no untouchability whatsoever between Hindus, Christians, Mussalmans, Parsis, and the rest. I am convinced that if this great change of heart can be brought about among millions of *savarna* Hindus, and if their hearts can be purified—as certainly they will be purified —we should live in India as one people, trusting each other, and without any mutual distrust or suspicion. It is untouchability with all its subtle forms that separates us from one another, and makes life itself unlovely and difficult to live.

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What Students Can Do

YOU must bravely and firmly forget the distinctions of high and low between caste-men and caste-men, or caste-men and non-castemen. And, if you will do this elementary thing, you will know what you can do to demonstrate your affection for Harijan boys and girls. I tell you that will be an education infinitely superior to the education received through books. And if you will go to their *cheries*, you will find also a book that will be a Book of Life and not the mere printed page that you can learn by heart. The root meaning of education is drawing out. If you will draw the best out of yourselves, it is the best education.[5]

What Boy-Scouts Can Do

ALL true scouts have my blessings. In my many wanderings over many parts of the world, I have come in contact with thousands of boy-scouts. True scouts are brave, considerate, courteous, and intelligent. They should have a full sense of their duty. They have been working to preserve order at the numerous fairs in the country where millions gather. I would also like them to give a part of their time to the service of the Harijans. Anyone who sees Harijan quarters with my eye will be convinced that there is ample scope for service for all who have the will and the capacity to do it. It does not require extraordinary intelligence. The only thing required is a sense of identification with the Harijans.[6]

Scouting must aim not merely at the training of the body but that of the brain and heart, too. It would be a poor peformance if it confines itself to mere externals and ignores the internal.[7]

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One Thing Needful

THE one thing needful for effective Harijan service, and for that matter all service of the poor, the forlorn, the helpless, is purity of personal character in the servant. Without it, possession of even the highest intellectual ability and administrative capacity is of no account. It may even prove a hindrance; whereas possession of a pure character, combined with love of such service, will assuredly develop or provide the requisite intellectual and administrative capacity.[8]

Youth will be emotional all the world over. Hence the utter necessity of preconceived and deliberate *Brahmacharya* during the study period, *i.e.*, at least 25 years. Let the youth of the country know that this Harijan service is the most difficult of all human services. I do not publish one-tenth of what comes under my notice of moral degradation to which the criminal neglect of caste-Hindus has reduced them. The work, therefore, demands the highest purity and the greatest simplicity on the part of the workers.[9]

Prove Your Credentials

IF you want to convince Hindu society that untouchability cannot be part of religion, and that it is a hideous error, you have to develop character and to show in your lives that to believe in some people being touchables and some untouchables is not religion but the reverse. If you have no character to lose, people will have no faith in you. You will have to move among the masses, you will have to bring about a change in their hearts. The so-called orthodox do not represent the masses, nor do they represent the correct interpretation of the scriptures. They can react on the masses. But character alone will have effect on the masses. Masses will

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not argue. They will simply want to know who are the men who go to them. If those men have credentials, the masses will listen to them ; if they have no credentials, the masses will not listen. It is in the midst of these people that you have to bend your backs and work in their midst, and assure them that you have gone to them not with any mental reservations, nor with any base motives, but with pure motive of serving them and taking the message of love and peace in their midst. If you will do that, you will find a ready response from them.[10]

Need for Humility

THE first thing you students have to learn is humility, without which you cannot make a good use of your attainments. You might achieve academic distinction and secure high office, but if you would devote your learning to the service of man, humility is absolutely necessary. There is a vast number of bright students among you, but they scarcely exist for the poor, long-suffering Indian villager. The ideal all the world over is that man's intellectual and spiritual gifts are designed for service, and that he should use his hands and feet in order to obtain his livelihood. In ancient times, jurisconsults charged their clients nothing for their advice, and even now barristers cannot sue a client for fees, which are called their honorarium. If you wish to serve the country, it would not do for you to become imitation *sahebs*, like the jackdaw in the fable dressed up in peacock's feathers. You should realize that you have to serve a nation whose average income per head is Rs. 40 according to Lord Curzon. You can render this service only if you are satisfied with a coarse piece of *Khadi* and give up all ambition of living

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in expensive European style. You should, as men of culture, also be ashamed of exacting large sums of money as dowry from your prospective fathers-in-law.

And, again, how can you serve Harijans, if you are not humble and simple in habits? Can you clean Harijan quarters with silk suits on your person? You can render much Harijan service during your leisure hours without interference with your studies. You can also utilize your vacations for the purpose.

We have degraded the Harijans to such an extent that the latter make a grievance of it, if they cease to get the leavings of food. Service of such people is possible only if we are pure at heart and full of faith in our mission. It would not suffice merely to improve their economic conditions.[11]

The Tragic Fact

THE Harijans have got so used to the leavings that they not only do not mind them, but look forward to them. Not to receive them they will regard as a positive deprivation. But this tragic fact just shows the degradation both of Harijans and the caste-Hindus. The students need not worry about what happens in other places. The first thing is for them to be in the right, and I suggest to them that they should resolutely set apart for their sweepers a liberal amount of the food that is ordinarily cooked for them.

I know something of the hostel life all over India. It is my conviction that the general body of students spend far more on delicacies and luxuries than they should. I know, too, that many students consider it undignified not to leave their plates with ample remains of the helpings they had.

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I suggest to them that to have any leavings whatsoever on their plates is undignified and a sign of disregard for the poor people. No one, least of all a student, has a right to take on his plate more than he could comfortably eat. A student has no business to multiply the delicacies and luxuries. The student life is meant for the cultivation of self-restraint in everything, and if they will follow the method of self-restraint and adopt the clean habit of not having any leavings on their plates, they would find that they would effect a saving in their expenses, in spite of setting apart a generous portion for their sweepers from the ordinary food that may be cooked for themselves.

And then, after having done that, I should expect them to treat the Harijans as if they were their own blood-relations,* speak to them kindly and tell them why it is necessary for them to give up the unclean habit of eating the leavings of other people's plates, and of making other reforms in their lives.[12]

Students and Vacation

AS to the use of the vacation by students, if they will approach the work with zeal, they can undoubtedly do many things. I enumerate a few of them :

1. Conduct night and day schools with just a short course, well conceived, to last for the period of the vacation.

2. Visit Harijan quarters and clean them, taking the assistance of Harijans if they would give it.

*" The only guidance I can give is to ask them (students) to do the Harijans as they would have the Harijans do to them if they were untouchables. In other words, they should regard Harijans as their blood brothers and sisters. If they will visit Harijan quarters in that spirit, they will always find the right word and the right action"

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3. Taking Harijan children for excursions, showing them sights near their villages, and teaching them how to study Nature, and generally interesting them in their surroundings, giving them, by the way, a working knowledge of Geography and History.

4. Reading to them simple stories from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

5. Teaching them simple *Bhajans*.

6. Cleaning the Harijan boys of all the dirt that they would find about their persons, and giving both the grown-ups and the children simple lessons in hygiene.

7. Taking a detailed census, in selected areas, of the condition of Harijans.

8. Taking medical aid to the ailing Harijans.

This is but a sample of what is possible to do among the Harijans. It is a list hurriedly made, but a thoughtful student will, I have no doubt, add many other items.

I have so far confined my attention to the service of Harijans, but there is a service no less necessary to be rendered to caste-Hindus. The students can often, in the gentlest manner possible, carry the message of anti-untouchability to them in spite of themselves. There is so much ignorance which can be easily dispelled by a judicious distribution of clean authentic literature. The students can make a survey of those who are for abolishing untouchability and who are against, and whilst they are making this survey, they may take note of wells, schools, ponds, and temples open to Harijans, and of those closed to them.

If they will do all these things in a methodical and persistent manner, they will find the results to be startling. Every

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student should keep a log-book in which he should enter the details of his work, and, at the end of the vacation, a comprehensive but brief report of the results of their labours could be prepared and sent by them to the Harijan Sevak Sangh of their province.[13]

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CHAPTER XV

STUDENTS AND STRIKES

A LABOUR strike is bad enough, a students' strike is worse, whether it is justly or unjustly declared. It is worse because of the consequences it entails in the end, and because of the status of the parties. Unlike labourers, students are educated and can have no material interest to serve by strikes ; and unlike employers, heads of educational institutions have no interest in conflict with that of the students. Students, moreover, are supposed to be embodiments of discipline. A strike of students, therefore, produces far-reaching consequences, and can only be justified in extraordinary circumstances.

But, though occasions for students' strikes in well-ordered schools and colleges must be rare, it is not impossible to conceive such as to warrant strikes on their part. Thus, for instance, if a Principal, running counter to public opinion refuses to recognize a day of universal rejoicing as a holiday, which both parents and their school or college-going children may desire, students will be justified in declaring a strike for that day. Such occasions will be more frequent in India as the students grow more self-conscious, and become more alive to a sense of their responsibility to the nation.[1]

In a country groaning as India is under foreign rule, it is impossible to prevent students from taking part in movements for national freedom. All that can be done is to regulate their enthusiasm so as not to interfere with their studies. They may not become partisans taking sides with warring parties. But they have a right to be left free to hold and actively to [illegible] opinion they choose. The function

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of educational institutions is to impart education to the boys and girls who choose to join them and therethrough to help to mould their character, never to interfere with their political or other non-moral activities outside the school room.[2]

Professors and teachers, if they are to be popular with their pupils, have to identify themselves with their activities and aspirations so long as they are not unhealthy or immoral.[3]

It is my conviction that our schools and colleges, instead of making us manly, make us obsequious, timid, indecisive and ballastless. Manliness consists not in bluff, bravado, or lordliness. It consists in daring to do the right and facing consequences, whether it is in matters social, political or other. It consists in deeds, not in words.[4]

Nationalism Not a Crime

THE students' minds must not be caged, nor for that matter those of the teachers. The teachers can only point to their pupils what they or the State considers is the best way. Having done so, they have no right to curb their pupils' thoughts and feelings. This does not mean that they are not to be subjected to any discipline. No school can be run without it. But discipline has nothing to do with artificial restraint upon the students' all-round growth. This is impossible where they are subjected to espionage. The fact is that hitherto they have been in an atmosphere subtly anti-national where it has not been openly that. The students should know that the cultivation of nationalism is not a crime, but a virtue.[5]

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Political Strikes

A COLLEGE student writes :

> " I request you to let me know your opinion on students taking part in strikes like Andamans Day, Abattoir Day, etc."

Whilst I have pleaded for the removal of restrictions on the speech and movements of students, I am not able to support political strikes or demonstrations. Students should have the greatest freedom of expression and of opinion. They may openly sympathize with any political party they like. But, in my opinion, they may not have freedom of action whilst they are studying. A student cannot be an active politician and pursue his studies at the same time. It is difficult to draw hard and fast lines at the time of big national upheavals. Then, they do not strike or, if the word ' strike ' can be used in such circumstances, it is a wholesale strike ; it is a suspension of studies. Thus, what may appear to be an exception is not one in reality.[6]

The system of education is responsible for the lack of character wherever it shows itself. The remedy now is not to seek my opinion or assistance, but for the teachers to make common cause with the students and lead them to victory. The latter know the tragic history of their own nation, they know how the other nations have gained their liberty. It is impossible to restrain them from working for the freedom of their own country. If they are not properly guided in their approach to their goal, they will take the means that their unripe and unaided reason will suggest. In any event, in so far as I am concerned, I have shown the way. If I am responsible for their enthusiasm, I am glad. I am

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trying, too, to guide it in the right direction. If they go wrong in spite of my effort, I cannot be held responsible.[7]

Filth in Literature

I THINK I have written often enough against strikes by students and pupils, except on the rarest of occasions. I hold it to be quite wrong on the part of students and pupils to take part in political demonstrations and party politics. Such ferment interferes with serious study and unfits students for solid work as future citizens. There is one thing, however, for which it is the duty of students and pupils to strike. I have received a letter giving copious specimens of obscene and erotic passages from the text-books prescribed by various universities. They make sickening reading. I have never come across such filth in all the literature that I have read. The extracts are impartially given both from Sanskrit, Persian and Hindi poets. My attention was first drawn to such writings by the girls of Mahila Ashram, Wardha, and recently by my daughter-in-law who is studying in the Kanya Gurukul at Dehra Dun. Though she is not illiterate, she had never come across such obscenity as she found in some of her text-books. She appealed to me for assistance. I have been moving the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan authorities. But big institutions move slowly. Monopolies grow up. Self-interest of authors and publishers prevents reform. The altar of literature claims special incense. My daughter-in-law suggested, and I at once fell in with her suggestion, that she would risk failure at her examination and omit to learn the obscene or erotic passages. This is a mild strike on her part, but a quite good and wholly effective one for herself. Here is an occasion which not only justifies a strike on the

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part of students and pupils, it is, in my opinion, their duty to rise in revolt against such literature being forced on them.

It is one thing to defend the liberty to read what one likes. But it is a wholly different thing to force on young minds acquaintance with literature that cannot but excite their animal passions and an unhealthy curiosity about things which, in due course and to the extent necessary, they are bound to learn. The evil becomes accentuated when it comes in the guise of innocent literature, bearing the *imprimatur* of great universities.

An orderly strike on the part of students is the quickest way of bringing about the much-needed reform. Such a strike would not be boisterous. It would simply consist in the students notifying boycott of examinations, which require a study of objectionable literature. It is the duty of every pure-minded student to rebel against obscenity.[8]

Rowdyism in Strikes

I HAVE two letters from schoolmasters, besides others from laymen, complaining of students' rowdyism. The Principal says that the students blocked the passage of those who wanted to attend the classes. They twice turned away girls who did not listen to them. They rushed at the classes and made noises, making classes impossible.

Obstruction, rowdyism and the like are naked violence. I am credited with influence over students. If I have any, I would ask them to observe non-violence in thought, word and deed.[9]

If students have a real grievance against their teachers, they may have the right to strike and even picket their school or college, but only to the extent of politely requesting the

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unwary from attending their classes. They could do so by speaking or by distributing leaflets. But they may not obstruct the passage* or use any coercion against those who do not want to strike.... I belong to the old school which believed in reverence for teachers. I can understand not going to a school for whose teachers I have no regard. But I cannot understand disrespect towards or vilification of my teachers. Such conduct is ungentlemanly, and all ungentlemanliness is violence.[10]

I have a letter from Annamalai, addressed to a colleague, giving a detailed description of the students' strike. According to the letter, the strikers prostrate themselves in front of the entrances to prevent non-strikers from attending classes ; and when classes are held, they enter the class-rooms, shout and otherwise make the holding of classes impossible. The letter ends by saying that the strikers are likely to give up the strike, if they know that in my opinion the methods adopted by them are contrary to non-violence.

If the description produced by me is correct, I have no hesitation in saying that the methods adopted by the strikers are not only not non-violent, but positively violent. I would implore the strikers to desist from the methods they have adopted, and allow those who want to attend classes to do so without any obstruction.[11]

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*" Surely, if someone blocks the passage to my house, his action is violence just as much as if he pushed me bodily from the door-step."

—*Harijan* : March 4, 1939.

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CHAPTER XVI

STUDENTS AND POLITICS

THE students cannot be away from politics. Politics is as essential to them as religion. Politics cannot be divorced from religion.[1]

Politics, divorced of religion, has absolutely no meaning. If the student-world crowd the political platforms of this country, to my mind it is not necessarily a healthy sign of national growth ; but that does not mean that you, in your student life, ought not to study politics. Politics are a part of our being ; we ought to understand our national institutions, and we ought to understand our national growth and all those things. We may do it from our infancy. But we want also the steady light, the infallible light of religious faith ; not a faith which merely appeals to the intelligence, but a faith which is indellibly inscribed on the heart. First, we want to realize that religious consciousness, and immediately we have done that, I think the whole department of life is open to us, and it should then be a sacred privilege of students and everybody to partake of that whole life, so that when they grow to manhood and when they leave their colleges, they may do so as men properly equipped to battle with life. To-day what happens is this : much of the political life is confined to student life ; immediately the students leave their colleges and cease to be students, they sink into oblivion, they seek miserable employments, carrying miserable emoluments, rising no higher in their aspirations, knowing nothing of God, knowing nothing of fresh air or bright light, and nothing of that real vigorous independence that comes

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out of obedience to these laws that I have ventured to place before you.[2]*

Participation in National Movements

I THINK it is their clear duty to take a leading part in the political movement of their country. They are doing so all the world over. In India, where the political consciousness has till recently been unfortunately confined in a large measure to the English-educated class, their duty is, indeed, greater. In China and Egypt, it is the students who have made the national movement possible. They cannot do less in India.[3]

It can be said without fear of contradiction that it were the students of China who led the fight for freedom in that great country ; it is the students in Egypt who are in the forefront in Egypt's struggle for real independence. Students of India are expected to do no less. They attend schools and colleges, or should attend, not for self but for service. They should be the salt of the nation.

The greatest obstacle in the way of students is fear of consequences mostly imaginary. The first lesson, therefore, that students have to learn is to shed fear. Freedom can never be won by those who are afraid of rustication, poverty, and even death. Let them realize that learning without courage is like a waxen statue beautiful to look at, but bound to melt at the least touch of a hot substance.[4]

It is impossible to prevent students from taking part in movements for national freedom. All that can be done is

*Reference is to the vows of Truth, *Ahimsa* (Non-violence), Celibacy, Control of the Palate, Non-Stealing, *Swadeshi*, Fearlessness, Removal of Untouchability, etc.—Ed.

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to regulate their enthusiasm, so as not to interfere with their studies. They may not become partisans, taking sides with warring parties. But they have a right to be left free to hold, and actively to advocate, what political opinion they choose. The function of educational institutions is to impart education to the boys and girls who choose to join them, and therethrough to help to mould their character, never to interfere with their political or other non-moral activities outside the school-room.[5]

Power Politics

I HAVE a special claim upon the students and they upon me, for I regard myself still as a student and also because from the very commencement of my return to India, I have been in close touch with them and many of them have served the cause of *Satyagraha*. Therefore, even if the whole of the student world were to repudiate me for causes which in their very nature must be temporary, I am not going to be deterred from tendering my advice for fear of rejection.

Students cannot afford to have party politics. They may hear all parties, as they read all sorts of books, but their business is to assimilate the truth of all and reject the balance. That is the only worthy attitude that they can take. Power politics should be unknown to the student world. Immediately they dabble in that class of work, they cease to be students and will, therefore, fail to serve the country in its crisis. . . . Let them, therefore, think fifty times before rejecting my advice.[6]

For the students, there should be no party politics. There should be no Socialist, Communist, Congress and other groups among students. They should be all students first and last, [illegible] as much knowledge as possible, and

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that for the sake of the service of the people, not for the sake of getting jobs.[7]

Students are the makers of the future. They cannot be partitioned. I am sorry to observe that neither the students have thought for themselves, nor have the leaders left them to their studies so that they can become good citizens. The rot began with the alien government. We, the inheritors, have not taken the trouble to rectify the errors of the past. Then the different political groups have sought to catch the students as if they were shoals of fish. And stupidly, the students have run into the net spread for them.

It is, therefore, a Herculean task for any students' organization to undertake. But there must be a heroic spirit among them who would not shrink from the task. The scope will be to knit them together into one. This they cannot do unless they will learn to steer clear of active politics. A student's duty is to study the various problems that require solution. His time for action comes after he finishes his studies.[8]

Eschew Active Politics

Q. Do you think it is possible for the students' organizations to eschew politics completely ? If not, what, in your opinion, is the extent to which students' organizations should interest themselves in politics ?

A. They must eschew active politics. It is a sign of one-sided growth that all parties have made use of the student world for their purpose. This was probably inevitable when the purpose of education was to create a race of slaves who would hug their slavery. That part of the business is over, I hope. The students' first business is to think

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the education that the children of a free nation should receive. The education of to-day is obviously not such. I must not go into the question as to what it should be. Only they must not allow themselves to be deceived into the belief that it is the function only of the elders in the University Senates. They must stimulate the faculty of thinking. I do not even remotely suggest that the students can force the situation by strikes and the like. They have to create public opinion by offering constructive and enlightened criticism. The senators, having been brought up in the old school, are slow to move. They can truly be acted upon by enlightenment.[9]

Q. Should students' organizations have separate identity or should they ally themselves with the different political parties ?

A. Students should do in this case what they think proper and advantageous for their organizations and, if experience proves otherwise, they must give up party affiliation. Students should not indulge in unnecessary abuse of students' belonging to different ideology.[10]

About Students

IF there is one compact students' organization, it can become a mighty instrument of service. Their objective can only be one : never for the purpose of finding a lucrative career, but fitting themselves for the service of the Motherland. If they were to do so, their knowledge would attain a great height. Agitation is only for those who had completed their studies. While studying, the only occupation of students must be to increase their knowledge. The education, as it is prescribed to-day, is detrimental, conceived in terms of the masses of India. It is possible to show that the present

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education has been of some use to the country. I regard it as negligible. Let no one be deceived by it. The acid test of its usefulness is this : Does it make, as it should, an effective contribution to the production of food and clothing ? What part does the student world play in allaying the present senseless slaughter ? All education in a country has got to be demonstrably in promotion of the progress of the country in which it is given. Who will deny that education in India has not served that purpose ? Hence, one purpose of the organization should be to discover the defects of the present education and seek to remove them, so far as possible in their own persons. By their correct conduct, they will be able to convert to their view the heads of education. If they do so, they will never be entangled in party politics. In the revised scheme, constructive and creative programme will naturally have its due place. Indirectly, their action will keep the politics of the country free of the spirit of exploitation.[11]

Morality and Politics

THERE are some who think that morality has nothing to do with politics. We do not concern ourselves with the character of our leaders. The democracies of Europe and America steer clear of any notion of morality having anything to do with politics. Bad characters are often great intellects, and they can manage certain affairs well enough by the force of their intellect. The private character of some of the leading men of the House of Commons will not bear examination. We, too, have often carried on our political movement in the same fashion. We did not concern ourselves with the morals of the Congress delegates or leaders. But, in 1920, we struck an entirely new departure and we declared

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that since Truth and Non-violence were the sole means to be employed by the Congress to reach its goal, self-purification was necessary even in political life.

To-day there is not much open opposition to the idea, though there are many who secretly believe that politics should have nothing to do with morality. If *Swaraj* was not meant to civilize us, and to purify and stabilize our civilization, it would be nothing worth. The very essence of our civilization is that we give a paramount place to morality in all our affairs, public or private.[12]

I believe that there must be perfect correspondence between private and public conduct.[13]

There is in modern public life a tendency to ignore altogether the character of a public worker so long as he works efficiently as a unit in an administrative machinery. It is said that everybody's character is his own private concern. Though I have known this view to have been often taken, I have never been able to appreciate, much less to adopt, it. I have known the serious consequences overtaking organizations that have counted private character as a matter of no consequence. I have no manner of doubt that possession of a spotless character is the indispensable requisite of such service.[14]

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CHAPTER XVII

STUDENTS AND CONSTRUCTIVE PROGRAMME

I HAVE always cultivated close contact with students. They know me and I know them. They have given me service. Many ex-collegians are my esteemed co-workers. I know that they are the hope of the future. In the hey-day of Non-co-operation, they were invited to leave their schools and colleges. Some professors and students, who responded to the Congress call, have remained steadfast and gained much for the country and themselves. But experience has shown that the lure of the current education, though it is false and unnatural, is too much for the youth of the country. College education provides a career. It is a passport for entrance to the charmed circle. Pardonable hunger for knowledge cannot be satisfied otherwise than by going through the usual rut. They do not mind the waste of precious years in acquiring knowledge of an utterly foreign language which takes the place of the mother-tongue. The sin of it is never felt. They and their teachers have made up their minds that the indigenous languages are useless for gaining access to modern thought and the modern sciences. I wonder how the Japanese are faring. For, their education, I understand, is all given in Japanese. The Chinese Generalissimo* knows very little, if anything, of English.

But such as the students are, it is from these young men and women that the future leaders of the nation are to rise. Unfortunately, they are acted upon by every variety of influence. Non- violence offers them little attraction. A blow for a blow or two for one is an easily understandable pro-

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* Marshal Chiang-Kai-Shek.

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position. It seems to yield immediate result, though momentary. It is a never-ending trial of brute strength, as we see in time of war among brutes or among human beings. Appreciation of non-violence means patient research and still more patient and difficult practice. I have not entered the list of competitors for the students' hand, for the reasons that have dictated my course about *Kisans* and Labour. But I am myself a fellow student, using the word in its broader sense. My University is different from theirs. They have a standing invitation from me to come to my University and join me in my search. Here are the terms :

1. Students must not take part in party politics. They are students, searchers, not politicians.

2. They may not resort to political strikes. They must have their heroes, but their devotion to them is to be shown by copying the best in their heroes, not by going on strikes, if the heroes are imprisoned or die, or are even sent to the gallows. If their grief is unbearable and if all the students feel equally, schools or colleges may be closed on such occasions, with the consent of their Principals. If the Principals will not listen, it is open to the students to leave their institutions in a becoming manner till the managers repent and call them back. On no account may they use coercion against dissentients or against the authorities. They must have the confidence that, if they are united and dignified in their conduct, they are sure to win.

3. They must all do sacrificial spinning in a scientific manner. Their tools shall be always neat, clean, and in good order and condition. If possible, they will learn to make the

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themselves. Their yarn will naturally be of the highest quality. They will study the literature about spinning with all its economic, social, moral, and political implications.

4. They will be *Khadi* users all through and use village products to the exclusion of all analogous things, foreign or machine made.

5. They may not impose *Vande Mataram* or the National Flag on others. They may wear National Flag buttons on their own persons, but not force others to do the same.

6. They can enforce the message of the Tri-coloured Flag in their own persons, and harbour neither communalism nor untouchability in their hearts. They will cultivate real friendship with students of other faiths and with Harijans, as if they were their own kith and kin.

7. They will make it a point to give first aid to their injured neighbours and do scavenging and cleaning in the neighbouring villages and instruct village children and adults.

8. They will learn the national language, Hindustani, in its present double dress, two forms of speech and two scripts, so that they may feel at home whether Hindi or Urdu is spoken and Nagri or Urdu script is written.

9. They will translate into their own mother-tongue everything new they may learn, and transmit it in their weekly rounds to the surrounding villages.

10. They will do nothing in secret ; they will be above board in all their dealings ; they will lead a pure life of self-restraint ; shed all fear and be always ready to protect their weak fellow-students ; and be ready to quell riots by non-violent conduct at the risk of their lives. And when the

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final heat of the struggle comes, they will leave their institutions and, if need be, sacrifice themselves for the freedom of their country.

11. They will be scrupulously correct and chivalrous in their behaviour towards their fellow-students (girls).

For working out the programme I have sketched for them, the students must find time. I know that they waste a great deal of time in idleness. By strict economy, they can save many hours. But I do not want to put an undue strain upon any student. I would, therefore, advise patriotic students to lose one year, not at a stretch, but spread it over their whole study. They will find that one year so given, will not be waste of time. The effort will add to their equipment—mental, moral and physical.[1]

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CHAPTER XVIII

QUESTION BOX

National Service

Q. TO-DAY, the majority of students are not interesting themselves in the national service. Many of them are cultivating what they consider 'fashionable' Western habits, and more and more students are resorting to bad habits like drinking, etc. There is little efficiency and little desire for independent thinking. We want to tackle all these problems, and build up character, discipline and efficiency in youth. How do you think we can do it ?

A. This deals with the present distemper. It will disappear when a calm atmosphere is produced, when the students cease to be agitators and take to sober studies. A student's life has been rightly likened to the life of *Sannyasi.** He must be the embodiment of simple living and high thinking. He must be discipline-incarnate. His pleasure is derived from his studies. They do provide real pleasure when study ceases to be a tax the student has to pay. What can be a greater pleasure than that a student marches from knowledge to more knowledge ?[1]

Students' Part

Q. What part do you expect the student world to take in the freedom movement ?

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* " If I can speak from my knowledge of Hindu belief, the life of a student is to correspond to the life of a *Sannyasi* up to the time his studies end. He is to be under the strictest discipline. He cannot marry, nor indulge in dissipation. He cannot indulge in drinks and the like. His behaviour is to be a pattern of exemplary self-restraint."

[1] —*Harijan* : Sept. 7, 1947.

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idol worship. I find solace in idol worship, but I cannot give an answer to my Muslim friend in terms of what may be called convincing. Will you say something on idol worship?

A. My sympathies are both with you and your Muslim friend. If your friend has real love for you, he will conquer his prejudice against idol worship. A friendship, which exacts oneness of opinion and conduct, is not worth much. Friends have to tolerate one another's ways of life and thought, even though they may be different, except where the difference is fundamental. May be, your friend has come to think that it is sinful to associate with you as you are an idolator. Idolatry is bad, not so idol worship. An idolator makes a fetish of his idol. An idol worshipper sees God even in a stone and, therefore, takes the help of an idol to establish his union with God. Every Hindu child knows that the stone in the famous temple in Benares is not Kashi Vishwanath. But he believes that the Lord of the Universe does reside specially in that stone. This play of the imagination is permissible and healthy. Every edition of the *Gita* on a bookstall has not that sanctity which I ascribe to my own copy. Logic tells me there is no more sanctity in my own copy than in any other. The sanctity is in my imagination. That imagination brings about marvellous concrete results. It changes men's lives. I am of opinion that, whether we admit it or not, we are all idol worshippers or idolators, if the distinction I have drawn is not allowed. A book, a building, a picture, a carving are, surely, all images in which God does reside, but they are not God. He who says they are, errs.[5]

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Science and Industrialization

Q. I am one of those who are extremely interested in the utilization of Indian resources as one of the means for remedying the poverty of India. This is my sixth year in this country (America). My special field is wood-chemistry. I would have entered executive service, or taken up medical studies, if I were not so profoundly convinced of the importance of the industrial development of India....Would you approve of my going into industrial enterprise, say, pulp and paper manufacture ? What is your attitude in general on the question of adopting a sane, humanitarian industrial policy for India ? Do you stand for the progress of science ? I mean such progress which brings blessings to mankind, *e.g.*, the work of Pasteur of France, and that of Dr. Benting of Toronto ?

A. I answer this question publicly, as so many inquiries are received by me from students all over, and as so much misconception exists regarding my views on science. I should have no objection, whatsoever, to industrial enterprise such as the student has in view. Only, I would not call it necessarily humanitarian. A humanitarian industrial policy for India means to me a glorified revival of hand-spinning, for through it alone can pauperism, which is blighting the lives of millions of human beings in their own cottages in this land, be immediately removed. Everything else may thereafter be added, so as to increase the productive capacity of this country. I would, therefore, have all young men with scientific training to utilize their skill in making the spinning wheel, if it is possible, a more efficient instument of production in India's cottages. I am not opposed to the progress of science as such. On the contrary, the scientific spirit

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of the West commands my admiration; and if that admiration is qualified, it is because the scientist of the West takes no note of God's lower creation. I abhor vivisection with my whole soul. I detest the unpardonable slaughter of innocent life in the name of science and humanity so-called, and all the scientific discoveries stained with innocent blood I count as of no consequence. If the circulation of blood theory could not have been discovered without vivisection, the human kind could well have done without it. And, I see the day clearly dawning when the honest scientist of the West will put limitations upon the present methods of pursuing knowledge. Future measurements will take note not merely of the human family, but of all that lives ; and even as we are slowly but surely discovering that it is an error to suppose that Hindus can thrive upon the degradation of a fifth of themselves, or that peoples of the West can rise or live upon the exploitation and degradation of the Eastern and African nations, so shall we realize, in the fulness of time, that our dominion over the lower order of creation is not for their slaughter, but for their benefit equally with ours. For, I am as certain that they are endowed with a soul, as that I am.[6]

A Student's Questions

Q. I find a good deal of colour prejudice prevalent here (U.S.A.) and, at times, we have to undergo many hardships on account of our colour. What would you advise me to do in such cases ? Am I justified in writing home and telling them about it ? Or, am I justified in telling the United States people themselves whenever I get an invitation to speak in public ?

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A. Having gone there, live down the prejudice ; but resist unto life wherever it hurts your self-respect in any shape or form. Hardships must be the lot of those who have to live in an uncogenial atmosphere, and who will still retain their self-respect. You are certainly justified in writing about it anywhere, so long as you do so without bitterness and without exaggeration. It would be the most proper thing to tell in a dignified manner the people of the United States of the hardships whenever you get an opportunity.

Q. Would you please send me a small message for the students here ? They are, as a rule, very fine men and are preparing to devote their lives to Y.M.C.A. work.

A. If you mean Indian students, my humble advice is : Express the best that is in you in that far-off foreign land, so that your lives may be an example to your neighbours. Do not slavishly follow all that you see in the West. And, as you seem to be speaking on behalf of Christian students, I feel tempted to quote from the Bible :

> " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and everything will be added unto you."[7]

Advice to Law Students

Q. How to spiritualize the legal profession ?

A. I am glad you have put this question. For, I may say that if I cannot speak on this subject with authority, no one else can. For, throughout my career at the Bar, I never once departed from the strictest truth and honesty.

The first thing which you must always bear in mind, if you would spiritualize the practice of law, is not to make your profession subservient to the interests of your purse,

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as is unfortunately but too often the case at present, but to use your profession for the service of your country. There are instances of eminent lawyers in all countries who led a life of self-sacrifice, who devoted their brilliant legal talents entirely to the service of their country, although it spelt almost pauperism for them. In India, you have the instance of the late Mana Mohan Ghose. He took up the fight against the indigo planters and served his poor clients at the cost of his health, even at the risk of his life, without charging them a single pie for his labours. He was a most brilliant lawyer, yet he was a great philanthropist. That is an example that you should have before you. Or, better still, you can follow Ruskin's precept given in his book *Unto This Last*. 'Why should a lawyer charge fifteen pounds for his work', he asks, 'whilst a carpenter, for instance, hardly gets as many shillings for his work'? The fees charged by lawyers are unconscionable everywhere. I confess, I myself have charged what I would now call high fees. But even whilst I was engaged in my practice, let me tell you I never let my profession stand in the way of my public service.

And there is another thing which I would like to warn you against. In England, in South Africa, almost everywhere I have found that, in the practice of their profession, lawyers are, consciously or unconsciously, led into untruth for the sake of their clients. An eminent English lawyer has gone so far as to say that it may even be the duty of a lawyer to defend a client whom he knows to be guilty. There I disagree. The duty of a lawyer is always to place before the judges and to help them to arrive at the truth, never to prove the guilty as innocent. It is upto *you* to maintain the dignity of your profession. If you fail in your duty, what shall be-

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come of the other professions ? You, young men, should be the salt of the nation. If the salt loses its savour, wherewith shall it be salted ?[8]

Students' Difficulty

Q. We are students in Poona. We are taking part in the drive against illiteracy. Now, in the parts we are visiting, there are drunkards who threaten us if we go to teach people. Those among whom we are working are Harijans. They get frightened. Some suggest that proceedings should be taken against these drunkards. Some suggest we should try your method of wooing them. Will you advise ?

A. You are doing good work. Literacy drive and many such things are by-products of the big reform, perhaps the biggest of modern times. As to the drunkards, they must be treated as diseased persons entitled to our sympathy and service. You should, therefore, reason with them when they are sober, and take even the beating, if any, with good grace. I do not rule out court proceedings, but they will be evidence of want of enough *Ahimsa* in you. But you cannot go against your nature. If you do not evoke response from them to your wooing, your work must not be held up because of the obstruction referred to by you. Recourse to legal proceedings is then indicated. But you must make all honest effort before you go to law.[9]

Ahimsa vs. Self-Respect

Q. I am a university student. Yesterday evening, some of us went to a cinema show. During the performance, two of us went outside leaving our handkerchiefs behind on our seats. On our return, we found that two British soldiers had taken possession of these seats unceremoniously in spite of

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the clearest warning and entreaty by our friends. When requested to vacate the seats, they not only refused but showed an inclination to fight. They browbeat the cinema manager who, being Indian, was easily cowed down. In the end, the garrison officer was called and they vacated their seats. If he had not appeared, there would have been only two alternatives before us, either to resort to violence and maintain our self-respect, or to allow ourselves to be browbeaten and quietly occupy some other seats. The latter would have been humiliating. How would you apply the principle of non-violence under such circumstances ?

A. I must admit the difficulty of solving the riddle. Two ways occur to me of dealing with the situation non-violently. First, firmly to stand the ground till the seats are vacated ; second, deliberately so to stand as to obstruct the view of the usurpers. In each case, you run the risk of being beaten by the usurpers. I am not satisfied with my answers. But they meet the special circumstances in which we are placed. The ideal answer no doubt is not to bother about the usurpation of the personal right, but to reason with the usurpers and, if they do not listen, to report such cases to the authorities concerned and, in case of failure, take them to the highest tribunal. This is the constitutional method which is not taboo in a non-violent conception of society. Not to take the law into one's own hands is essentially a non-violent method. But the ideal has no relation to reality in this country, because the index of expectation of justice for Indians in cases where white men and specially white soldiers are concerned is almost zero. Hence it is necessary to resort to something like what I have suggested. But I know that when we have real Swa-

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violence in us, a non-violent way out is bound, without effort, to occur to us when we find ourselves in a difficult situation.[10]

Bolshevism

Q. What is your opinion about the social economics of Bolshevism and how far do you think they are fit to be copied by our country ?

A. I must confess that I have not yet been able fully to understand the meaning of Bolshevism. All that I know is that it aims at the abolition of the institution of private property. This is only an application of the ethical ideal of non-possession in the realm of economics, and if the people adopted this ideal of their own accord or could be made to accept it by means of peaceful persuasion, there would be nothing like it. But from what I know of Bolshevism, it not only does not preclude the use of force but freely sanctions it for the expropriation of private property and maintaining the collective State ownership of the same. And if that is so, I have no hesitation in saying that the Bolshevik regime, in its present form, cannot last for long. For, it is my firm conviction that nothing enduring can be built on violence. But be that as it may, there is no questioning the fact that the Bolshevik ideal has behind it the purest sacrifice of countless men and women who have given up their all for its sake, and an ideal that is sanctified by the sacrifices of such master spirits as Lenin cannot go in vain : the noble example of their renunciation will be emblazoned for ever and quicken and purify the ideal as time passes.[11]

Under Swaraj

Q. What, in your opinion, ought to be the basis of India's [illegible] economic constitution ? What place will such

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institution as savings banks, insurance companies etc., have in it ?

A. According to me, the economic constitution of India, and for the matter of that of the world, should be such that no one under it should suffer from want of food and clothing. In other words, everybody should be able to get sufficient work to enable him to make the two ends meet. And this ideal can be universally realized only if the means of production of elementary necessaries of life remain in the control of the masses. These should be freely available to all as God's air and water are or ought to be ; they should not be made a vehicle of traffic for the exploitation of others. Their monopolization by any country, nation or group of persons would be unjust. The neglect of this simple principle is the cause of the destitution that we witness to-day not only in this unhappy land, but other parts of the world, too. It is this evil that the *Khadi* movement is calculated to remedy. Savings banks and insurance companies will be there even when the economic reforms suggested to me have been effected, but their nature will have undergone a complete transformation. Savings banks to-day in India, though a useful institution, do not serve the very poorest. As for our insurance companies, they are of no use whatever to the poor. What part they can play in an ideal scheme of reconstruction such as I have postulated, is more than I can say. The function of savings banks ought to be to enable the poorest to husband their hard earned savings and to subserve the interest of the country generally. Though I have lost faith in most Government institutions, as I have said before, savings banks are good so far as they go, but unfortunately

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to-day their services are available only to urban section of the community, and, so long as our gold reserves are located outside India, they can hardly be regarded as trustworthy institutions. In the event of a war, all these banks may become not only utterly useless, but even a curse to the people inasmuch as the Government will not scruple to employ the funds held by thse banks against the depositors themselves. No Government institution can be depended upon to remain loyal in the interest of the people in emergency, if they are not controlled by and not run in the interests of the people. So long, therefore, as this primary condition is absent, banks are, in the last resort, additional links to keep the people in chains. They may exist, but it is well to understand where we are in respect even of such harmless looking institutions.[18]

Foreign vs. Swadeshi

Q. What is your opinion about the importation of foreign goods other than cloth into India ? Are there any foreign commodities which you would like to see immediately laid under prohibition ? What do you think should be the nature of India's foreign trade in the future ?

A. I am, more or less, indifferent with regard to trade in foreign goods other than cloth. I have never been an advocate of prohibition of all things foreign, because they are foreign. My economic creed is a complete taboo in respect of all foreign commodities, whose importation is likely to prove harmful to our indigenous interests. This means that we may not in any circumstances import a commodity that can be adequately supplied from our own country. For instance, I would regard it a sin to import Australian wheat on the score of its better quality, but I would not have the

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slightest hesitation in importing oatmeal from Scotland, if an absolute necessity for it is made out, because we do not grow oats in India. In other words, I would not countenance the boycott of a single foreign article out of ill-will or a feeling of hatred. Or, to take up a reverse case, India produces a sufficient quantity of leather ; it is my duty, therefore, to wear shoes made out of Indian leather only, even if it is comparatively dearer and of an inferior quality in preference to cheaper and superior quality foreign leather shoes. Similarly, I would condemn the introduction of foreign molasses or sugar, if enough of it is produced in India for our needs. It will be thus clear from the above that it is hardly possible for me to give an exhaustive catalogue of foreign articles whose importation in India ought to be prohibited. I have simply inculcated the general principle by which we can be g ided in all such cases. And this principle will hold good in future, too, so long as the conditions of production in our country remain as they are to-day.[13]

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GLOSSARY

Adhikara : right; qualification.

Ahimsa : non-violence; love.

Aparigraha : non-possession

Ardhanagana : better-half of man ; wife.

Ashram : a hermitage ; a retreat or home for community living.

Ashrama : one of the four states of life, *viz.*, student's, householder's, forest-dweller's and that of a recluse.

Asteya : non-stealing.

Avarna : an outcaste ; an untouchable.

Bhajans : religious songs ; hymns.

Bhakti : devotion.

Bhoga : enjoyment.

Bhogi : one who is given to pleasures and enjoyments of life.

Brahma or *Brahman :* Creator of the world in Hindu mythology ; God.

Brahmachari : one who observes *Brahmacharya* ; a celibate.

Brahmacharya : celibacy ; continence ; self-restraint.

Brahmin : a member of the highest caste among the Hindus.

Charkha : spinning-wheel.

Daridranarayana : God incarnated in the poor.

Deti-Leti : dowry system.

Dharma : religion ; duty ; law.

Gajendra : literally, king of elephants.

Gayatri : a Vedic prayer addressed to the Sun.

Grihastia : a householder.

Guru : a teacher ; a moral preceptor.

Harijan : literally, a man of God ; an untouchable.

Himsa : violence.

Jnana : knowledge.

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Kama : desire ; lust.

Khaddar or *Khadi :* handspun and hand-woven cloth.

Madar-i-Hind : Mother India.

Mahabharata : a great Hindu epic.

Mahajan : a village headman.

Maharaja : a king.

Mantra : a sacred verse or formula ; an incantation.

Manushya : man.

Moksha : salvation ; self-realization ; liberation from the cycle of birth and death.

Namaz : a Muslim prayer.

Nirvana : an utter extinction of ego ; supreme bliss ; Buddhist term for self-realization.

Pandit : a learned man.

Purdah : a cover ; a veil.

Raja : King.

Rama : the sweet and sacred name in Hinduism for God.

Ramanama : literally, the name of Rama, *i.e.*, God's name.

Rama Raj : kingdom of Rama ; kingdom of God.

Rishi : a seer ; a sage.

Sannyasa : renunciation of worldly pursuits and interests.

Sannyasi : a recluse.

Sati : a chaste and virtuous wife.

Satya : Truth.

Satyagraha : literally, holding on to Truth ; Truth-force ; soul force ; non-violent resistance.

Satyagrahi : one who practises *Satyagraha.*

Savarna : belonging to high caste.

Sethia : a wealthy man.

Shastras : Hindu religious scriptures.

Shastri : learned in the Hindu scriptures.

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Shikha : a tuft of hair.

Shraddha : a ceremony to the manes performed by high-caste Hindus.

Smritis : ancient Hindu law-books.

Snataks : degree-holders.

Swadeshi : literally, belonging to one's own country ; the principle of using things made locally or in one's own country.

Swaraj : self-rule ; self-government.

Tapasya : penance.

Upanishads : ancient philosophical writings of the Hindus.

Vande Matram : an Indian national song meaning ' Salutation to Mother ' *i.e.*, the Motherland.

Varna : literally, colour ; a class ; a caste.

Varnashrama : division of the Hindu society into four castes based on occupations (*Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya* and *Shudra*) and four stages of life (student's, householder's, forest-dweller's and that of a recluse).

Vedas : the earliest sacred scriptures of the Hindus.

Vidyalaya : school.

Vidyapith : university.

Vidyarthi : student.

Yajna : literally, worship ; hence sacrifice ; hence any sacrificial act or any act of selfless service.

Yamas : cardinal virtues or restraints like Non-violence, Truth, Non-stealing, Non-possession and Celibacy.

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6. PR, Jan. 26, 1941.
7. H, Jan. 18, 1948.
8. H, Aug. 17, 1947.
9. H, Aug. 17, 1947.
10. PR, March 16, 1945.
11. H, Sept. 7, 1947.
12. YI, Jan. 23, 1930.
13. H, March 2, 1947.
14. H, Nov. 7, 1936.

CHAPTER XVII

1. CP, 25.

CHAPTER XVIII

1. H, Aug. 17, 1947.
2. H, Feb. 17, 1940.
3. YI, Nov. 5, 1925.
4. YI, March 18, 1926.
5. H, March 9, 1940.
6. YI, Dec. 17, 1925.
7. YI, Feb. 25, 1926.
8. WGC, 86.
9. H, June 8, 1940.
10. H, Feb. 17, 1940.
11. YI, Nov. 15, 1928.
12. YI, Nov. 15, 1928.
13. YI, Nov. 15, 1928.

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BE NATION BUILDERS

"STUDENTS have got to become nation-builders. The base imitation of the West, the ability to speak and write correct and polished English, will not add one brick to the Temple of Freedom. The student world, which is receiving an education far too expensive for starving India, and an education which only a microscopic minority can ever hope to receive, is expected to qualify itself for it by giving its life-blood to the nation.

"Students must become pioneers in conservative reform, conserving all that is good in the nation and fearlessly ridding society of the innumerable abuses that have crept into it. They can, and they must, study and discuss social and economic questions which are as important to our generation as the highest political question. A nation-building programme can leave no part of the nation untouched.

"Students have to react upon the dumb millions. They have to learn to think not in terms of a province, or a town, or a class, or a caste, but in terms of a continent and of the millions who include untouchables, drunkards, hooligans and even prostitutes, for whose existence in our midst every one of us is responsible."

—M. K. GANDHI

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